

# *The Colorado Quarterly*

THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

**Fair Taxes for Mining**

MORRIS E. GARNSEY

**Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago"**

GERHARD LOOSE

**Frontiers of Anthropological Research**

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**The Mexican Border — If Any**

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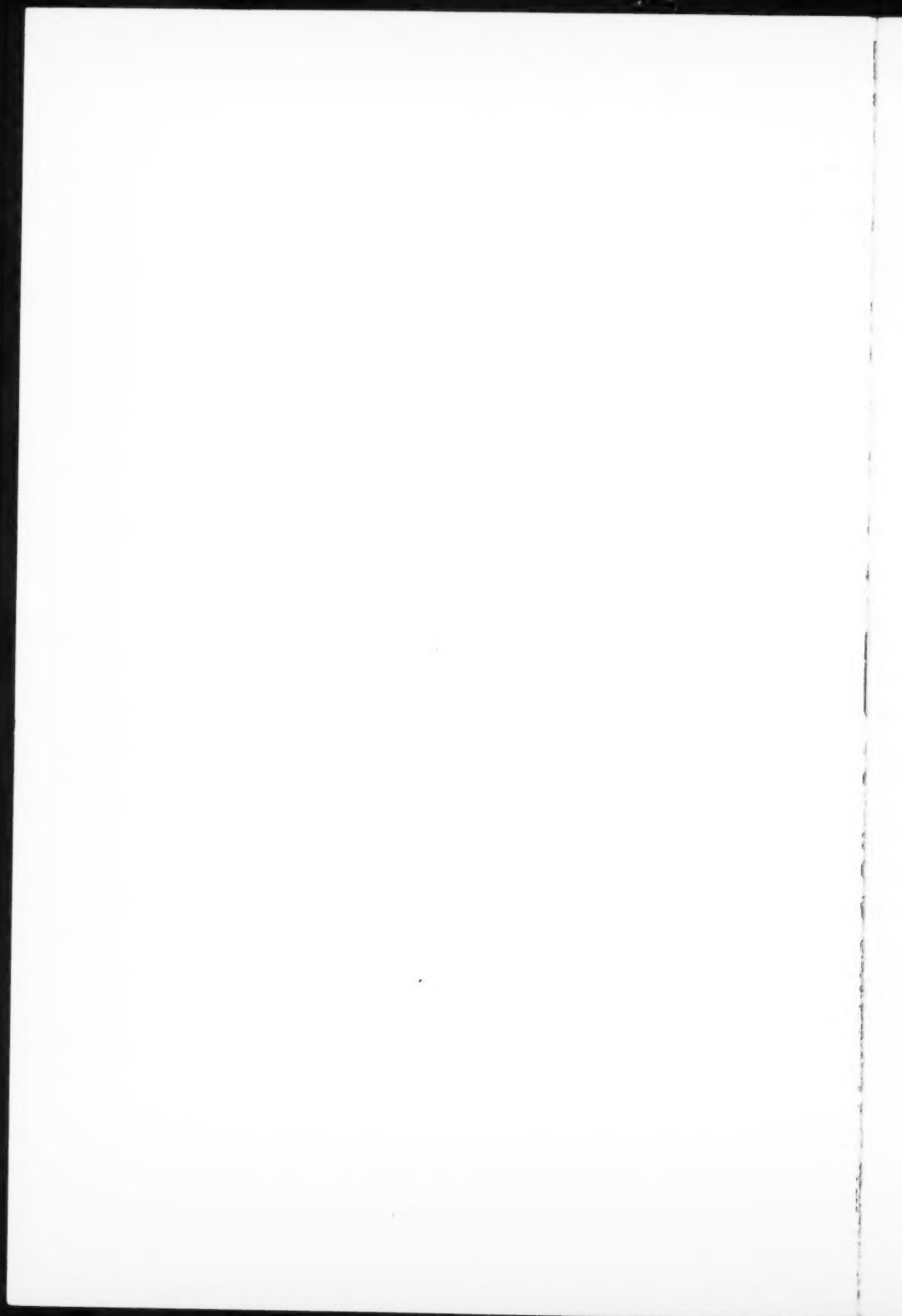
**True Witness: Katherine Anne Porter**

CHARLES KAPLAN

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VOLUME VII, NUMBER 3—WINTER, 1959

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(Continued on page 328)

## Fair taxes for mining

MORRIS E. GARNSEY

Ever since the war two important things have been happening to Colorado: one is a sharp increase in population growth; the other an equally sharp increase in industrialization and urbanization. These developments are by no means over; both are very likely to continue for at least another quarter of a century—probably for fifty years. (After that—who knows?)

These changes are part of national trends, but they are more intense in Colorado. For example, the *rate* of increase of population has been more rapid in Colorado than in the United States as a whole. Colorado has a higher birth rate than the national average and a higher immigration rate as well. Our population is now around 1.8 million, compared with 1.3 million in 1950. Even without an oil shale industry, the population should reach 2.5 million between 1975 and 1980. To add large-scale development of shale would mean to add another half-million people.

This population growth is being increasingly concentrated in urban areas. In 1940, more than one-third (36 percent) of the state's population lived in the Denver metropolitan area. By 1975-80, one-half of the much larger population is likely to be in this area. Perhaps three-fourths of the people of the state will live within a narrow metropolitan band stretching from Greeley to Trinidad.

With increasing urbanization, more and more people are dependent upon "city" jobs for their income. Already trade, services, and finance account for about one-third of all jobs in Colorado; government for 16 percent and manufacturing for 12 percent. Agriculture provides perhaps 20 percent of the jobs while mining accounts for only about 2.5 percent. In the future the relative importance of agriculture and mining as sources of income for Colorado citizens is likely to decline even further. Total income payments by these activities will rise, but at a slower rate than payments in other areas of enterprise.

The facts and implications of these trends are by now pretty well-known about the state. At first, only a very few persons saw what was coming, notably Gene Cervi, who has been trying in his *Journal* since early in the forties to persuade the public to face the many problems of change. The schoolmen woke up to what was happening even before the new population boom hit the school-rooms and have tried hard to keep up with it ever since. More recently the administrative branch of the state government has been making valiant efforts to accommodate itself to the new Colorado, as have a few of the able leaders in the legislative branch.

In one respect, however, the state has failed; and unless rapid revisions of attitude and policy are achieved, it faces even greater failures in the future. The simple fact is that the state is not providing adequate governmental services for a growing urbanized society, and that it is not raising enough tax money to support even the existing services on an adequate basis.

It is time that the people of Colorado take a long, hard look at their tax system; fortunately they will be able to do so as soon as the findings of the Governor's Tax Study are published. For the first time the efficiencies and inefficiencies, the equities and inequities of the system will be clearly revealed, and the citizen will have a factual basis for demanding changes. At last he will see something that was apparent to many even before the tax study was contemplated. It is simply that the metal mining industry of Colorado is not paying, and in modern times never has paid, its fair share of state taxes, and that, by not requiring it to pay a fair share, the state is ignoring an important source of needed revenue.

An indication of this situation was published by the well-known expert on Colorado's finances, Professor Earl Crockett, back in 1946. Using data for the real property tax Professor Crockett showed that in 1944 all agricultural lands, buildings, equipment, and livestock in the state were assessed at \$334.3 million and, on the basis of the average mill levy for the state, farmers and ranchers probably paid some \$12 million in property taxes. Their payment represented 3.4 percent of the gross value of the output of their farms and ranches. By contrast all mining properties in the state were assessed at \$46 million and probably paid property taxes of \$1.7 million. Thus, mining paid only 2.07 percent of the value of the gross output of the mines in that year.

Partly as a result of this study the Legislature adopted a form of severance tax on oil and gas in 1953 and since then the rapidly growing petroleum industry in Colorado has yielded 3 to \$4 million per year in tax revenues to the state. For some strange reason, however, the Legislature did not apply this new tax to metals; so the property tax continues to be the major tax levied against the mining industry. As a result the relative tax contribution of metal mining has continued to decline. Thus in 1950 metal mining contributed not more than 2.85 percent of its gross income to state and local government in the form of property taxes, while agriculture paid 3.54 percent. By 1957 the ratios were 2.15 percent for metal mining and 4.34 percent for agriculture. In other words the gap between property taxes on agriculture and those on metal mining has been widening steadily.

Actually the true situation is probably even worse than the one indicated by these figures. For the counties where metal mining is significant are usually the counties with mill levies well below the average for the state. Also, the property tax mill levy is applied only to one-fourth of the gross income of mines (or to net income if this exceeds one-fourth of gross), while most real property is assessed at 40 percent of market value. In addition, the state income tax allows a 50 percent depletion allowance for mines, which is framed in such a way that it has the effect of exempting mines from any state income tax on 50 percent of their profits. We find, therefore, that on the basis of a comparison of tax payments with income, metal mining properties are paying only half as much in taxes as is agriculture; and when we take account of the other tax factors favorable to mining, it appears that the metal mining industry of Colorado is avoiding from two-thirds to three-fourths of its share of the tax burden in Colorado. On this basis alone mining should pay three or four times as much in taxes as it is now paying.

But such calculations are by no means all of the story. There exists a long-established and venerable practice in taxation which is based on the idea that exhaustible resources such as minerals should carry a relatively *heavier* tax load instead of a lighter one. Natural wealth in forests and minerals are properly the natural heritage of all of the people. Under our system this wealth is given into the hands of individuals as private property. When land was

still a part of the public domain, a man could establish a homestead or file a claim and gather to himself the rewards of his labor. But the ideas of stewardship and of social responsibility always were present. A man should not ruin the soil needlessly, for there were future generations to come who must also live upon it. And if a man dug in a mine which would one day be worked out he should set aside, through taxes, a part of this wealth for the benefit of future generations. When a ton of metal ore is extracted, milled, and exported from Colorado, this natural resource is irretrievably lost to this state forever. Indeed, part of Colorado itself is lost. Therefore, it is argued that the people of this commonwealth are justified in recapturing a portion of this precious resource through a special tax on the wealth so produced, which directly or indirectly is paid by those throughout the world who benefit from the consumption of the metal in industry, trade, and commerce.

Around the turn of the century, a number of states such as Texas, Oklahoma, and West Virginia adopted severance taxes. The justification for these taxes was derived in part from the work of Henry Carter Adams, who in 1898, in *The Science of Finance* stated:

. . . the fund of value stored up by nature in the past may justly be called upon for special contributions for the support of the State. . . and it may be accepted as an established principle by all schools of economists that a royalty which particularizes itself is properly made the occasion of special assessments. The basis of taxation in these cases should be the royalty [i.e., income] accruing from the property, and the rate at which this royalty is taxed should vary with the peculiar conditions of each case.

Minnesota—a land of social-minded, God-fearing Swedes—is the prime example of the application of this philosophy to the realities of the mining industry. In 1921 Minnesota adopted an Occupation Tax on iron mining and, in harmony with the natural heritage doctrine, set aside 50 percent of the annual proceeds of the tax in a Permanent School Endowment Fund, which each year contributes its earnings to the operation of the schools and colleges of Minnesota. On June 30, 1958, this Fund amounted to \$223,075,502. Since 1957, property taxes have been insufficient to meet rising school costs; so the Occupation Tax has been called on to

fill the gap. Thus, half the current proceeds of the Minnesota tax now go directly to the schools.

It should be noted—and emphasized—that the Occupation Tax is collected *in addition* to property taxes presumably equal to those paid by agriculture and industry. On the other hand, the tax is so levied and so administered as not to be onerous to mines with special problems. Mining is an extra-hazardous occupation both for the worker and for the employer. Exploration and development are costly and risky. Reserves of ore are not always measurable. The prices of many minerals fluctuate sharply in response to world conditions of demand and supply. Some, if not all, of these conditions apply to iron mining, and Minnesota tax law is designed to give the smaller, high-cost producer a tax advantage. In Minnesota both the *ad valorem* property tax and the Occupation Tax provide for a labor-cost credit for low grade ores. Recently this credit has benefited more than one hundred mines and reduced the current levies of the Occupation Tax by some two million dollars.

Thus, it is possible to tax minerals without penalizing the small, the high-cost, or the new and risky enterprise. Mr. Reynolds Morse missed this point in his very interesting article, "The Future of Colorado Mining," in the Summer, 1958, *Colorado Quarterly*. He describes some of the special risk factors in mining and shows that in Colorado, geology and topography intensify some of these risks for some mines. But in his strictures against mineral taxation in general he is guilty of over-simplification and unwarranted generalization. Consequently, he is led to champion the intransigent position of the mining lobby which maintains that all taxes are bad and that present taxes penalize all of the industry. This is absurd. On the contrary, there are several sectors of the minerals industry in which a substantial upward revision of taxation is long overdue.

The Number One prospect for such an upward revision and for an Occupation Tax on minerals is molybdenum. The largest known deposit of molybdenum in the world is found in Lake County, Colorado, where American Metal Climax operates the largest underground mine of any kind in the world. In its special report to stockholders (November 27, 1957), the company announces that Climax produces "about 60 percent of the world's



production of molybdenum and a larger proportion of United State's production."

The monopolistic position of the company is reflected in the history of the prices of molybdenum concentrate and other products. From 1938 to 1948 the price of the concentrate was generally unchanged at forty-five cents per pound—a most unusual situation except where monopoly conditions exist. Since 1949 the price has risen simultaneously with certain revisions in the basis for price quotations to somewhere around \$1.10—\$1.18 per pound of "contained molybdenum."

Until the recent business slump production had climbed rapidly. Climax produced 24 million pounds of molybdenum in 1952, 43 million pounds in 1953, and 37 million pounds in 1956. According to the Colorado State Bureau of Mines the value of molybdenum produced in Colorado increased \$37 million in seven years:

1950	\$13,000,000
1951	22,500,000
1952	27,875,650
1953	37,306,341
1954	45,192,856
1955	45,536,600
1956	44,237,000
1957	50,109,464

This combination of favorable circumstances has produced extraordinary profits for the company. *Fortune* magazine reports that the 500 largest corporations in the United States have realized profits of 12 to 14 percent on their investment (ratio of net earnings to capital) in recent years. Climax' profits, by contrast, have been as high as 35 percent:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Net Profits after taxes</i>	<i>Percent of Net Earnings to Capital</i>
1956	\$15,153,000	24.4
1955	17,424,000	26.2
1954	15,605,000	27.4
1953	9,717,000	21.0
1952	6,071,000	16.0
1951	7,964,000	20.5
1950	12,925,000	35.1



If one takes into account the value of production and the profitability of the occupation of molybdenum mining in Colorado, and considers that Minnesota has collected an Occupation Tax on iron mining of 11 to 12.65 percent of the value of iron ore produced annually without adversely affecting the growth and expansion of that activity in the state, it is logical to conclude that Colorado could reasonably levy a tax of at least 10 percent on the mining of molybdenum. Such a tax would yield the state close to \$5 million per year except in the event of a prolonged strike, lock-out, or major depression.

The prospects for continuing yields of an Occupation Tax on molybdenum are very favorable. Climax has estimated its reserves at 418 million short tons of ore with an average grade of 0.43 percent molybdenum sulfide. All of this is mineable at current prices. It represents nearly 90 percent of all United States' reserves and is sufficient to provide profitable production for many decades.

In the case of Climax the arguments of the natural heritage doctrine are considerably reinforced by the absentee character of the corporation's ownership and management. Climax Molybdenum Corporation was incorporated in Delaware and its affairs have been directed from New York for a number of years. Its officers, directors, and major stockholders are more at home on Park Avenue than in Cherry Hills. Their properties and their incomes do not form a part of the tax-base of Colorado, and they pay few taxes to help support the state's governmental responsibilities.

The effects of absenteeism are almost certain to be felt more sharply in the future. For in 1957 Climax Molybdenum Corporation merged with American Metal Corporation to form American Metal Climax Inc. The American Metal Corporation is a world-wide mining and minerals processing company. Its principal subsidiaries are in Mexico and Africa. In Africa it owns a major or controlling interest in such companies as the Rhodesian Selection Trust, Limited; Tsameb Corporation, Limited; the Roan Antelope Copper Mines, Limited; Chibuluma Mines, Limited; Mufalira Copper Mines, Limited; Baluba Mines, Limited, etc. The president of American Metal, Hans A. Vogelstein, became president of the new company which absorbed Climax. Thus the Climax Molybdenum Corporation, which had been primarily a Colorado-Pennsylvania-New York enterprise, has now become a

unit of a much larger international corporation. The largest shareholders in the new company are numerous members of the Hochschild family, who hold over 1,300,000 shares of stock. The members of the Board of Directors of the company reside in London, Montreal, and New York. Only one lives in Colorado.

Perhaps it is no accident that the new corporation immediately adopted a new and tougher policy for operations in Colorado. At any rate labor-management relations at Climax worsened and culminated in a strike which began in July, 1958, and lasted for eighty-four days. On September 18, 1958, the *Denver Post* took note of the situation in an editorial entitled, "Time to Call a Halt at Climax." The *Post* said, in part:

The two-month-old molybdenum strike at Climax, Colo., is no longer a private affair between Local 24410 of the AFL-CIO and American Metal Climax Inc. It is bringing ruin to the Climax-Leadville area and threatening the future of one of Colorado's most important industries.

The public has a right to expect a far more energetic effort to bring the strike to a halt than has yet been made.

The corporation's 1,100 Climax employees took a cut of almost 25 pct. in take-home pay last April when the work week was reduced from six to five days. They asked the corporation to soften the blow by granting a raise in hourly rates, but the corporation turned them down.

Angered by an accumulation of grievances, the workers took a secret-ballot strike vote and walked off the job July 21. . . .

The corporation and the union settled down for a long, peaceful strike—both sides said might last six months. But by last week, the cost of that strike had become prohibitive, not only to the workers and the firm but to the central Colorado communities in which the workers live. . . .

We understand that American Metal Climax Inc. is beginning to recognize the danger. Up to this time it has rejected four separate proposals of the union without making a counterproposal. But, there were signs this week that the company is planning to resume negotiations and that some kind of an offer may be in the works.

A compromise at the bargaining table is likely to cost far less in the long run than a continuation of the strike. The future of the Climax-Leadville area may well depend on a speedy settlement of the dispute. Neither side can afford to wait for six months.

It is hard to believe that Coloradans who work for Climax are to be dealt with in the future by men who are more accustomed to dealing with native labor in Africa or that the welfare of many

thousands of Colorado's citizens is to be determined by remote control. One thing is apparent as of now. It is highly unlikely that American Metal Climax Inc., or any of its local representatives, will be serious contenders for "Good Citizenship Awards" in Colorado in 1959.

Molybdenum mining, however, is not the only kind now escaping fair taxation. A second area in which application of an Occupation Tax is desirable is the mining of uranium and vanadium. According to the Colorado Bureau of Mines there are 375 operating uranium mines in Colorado, which produced about \$40 million of uranium in 1957. The price of uranium is set by the Atomic Energy Commission, the sole purchaser. The federal government also has provided numerous bonuses and inducements for the production of uranium. These include such things as long-term purchase contracts, milling facilities, access roads, haulage and development allowances. Although it is heavily subsidized, uranium mining is expensive and uncertain. Here, as elsewhere, tax concessions for new and small ventures are indicated. Even with these a 10 percent Occupation Tax on uranium could still be expected to yield from 1 to \$3.5 million a year over the near future.

Vanadium is a co-product of uranium, but its use was already well established by 1940. Colorado is the leading producer of vanadium, accounting for 6.3 million pounds of total U.S. production of 7.4 million pounds in 1957. Production of vanadium is concentrated in five companies, of which the Vanadium Corporation of America is the most important. Like Climax, it has an international scope and its management is concentrated in the East. It is an absentee enterprise taking much from Colorado and giving little. In 1957 vanadium production in Colorado had a value of some \$12.5 million. An Occupation Tax on the mining of this metal ought to yield around a million dollars annually.

A third opportunity for an Occupation Tax is in the mining of gold and silver. The federal government determines the price of both these metals for reasons—both logical and illogical—which are related to its function of regulating the monetary system. Silver is purchased by the Treasury at 90.54 cents per ounce—a price far above its market value. Gold must be sold to the Treasury at \$35.00 per ounce. The free market price for gold is considerably

higher. The value of silver production in Colorado ranges from 2 to \$3 million per year. It is mostly a by-product of complex ores which also yield lead, zinc, etc. Gold production in Colorado is now in the 3 to \$4 million range. An Occupation Tax on these mining activities should yield at least a half-million dollars per year. It might yield considerably more if Mr. Merrill Shoup's constant pleas for a higher price for gold ever become effective. As president of the largest gold-mining enterprise in Colorado, the Golden Cycle Corporation, he is frequently in the news arguing that the United States should debase its currency for the benefit of the gold miners. To do so would lower the value of the dollar, encourage inflation, and disrupt our international trade relations. Nevertheless, this kind of audacity frequently succeeds; and Colorado should be prepared for it.

A fourth group of metals offers further opportunity for the equalization of the tax burden in the state, provided that an Occupation Tax in Colorado could be designed and administered with flexibility and due regard to fluctuating economic conditions. This group consists of lead, zinc, and tungsten. The value of the production of these three metals in Colorado has amounted to 14 to \$21 million per year in recent years. Lately, however, each of the three has been in economic difficulties. Lead and zinc have suffered from foreign competition and now have received special federal support in the form of import restrictions. Tungsten has been in over supply. Primary deposits of tungsten are spotty and poor. Federal stockpiling has ended. Much of the current production in Colorado is a by-product of other minerals output, notably molybdenum.

Nevertheless, an equitable and adaptable system of taxation on the mining of these metals could and should be worked out. Limited exemptions, a graduated scale of rates, or even an averaging of returns over a three- to five-year period are possibilities. Under the proper circumstances an Occupation Tax on the mining of lead, zinc, and tungsten could be expected to yield a minimum of a million dollars per year, and a maximum of twice as much or more.

There are still other mining occupations where sources of revenue are to be found and opportunities to achieve greater equity in tax responsibilities exist. These include fluorspar and some of

the newer and rarer minerals such as beryllium. It is hoped that the Legislature will carefully examine the entire range of possibilities.

The Legislature should also realize that the importance of an Occupation Tax on metal mines based on their ability to pay should carry with it certain positive benefits to the entire mining industry of the state. When mining is actually called upon to pay heavier taxes, it should expect to receive better services from the state. At present it receives very few. The branches of the state government concerned with metal mining are among the least efficient and least effective of the state's administrative agencies.

Recognizing the desirability of the development of the mineral resources of the state, the Legislature created the State Metal Mining Fund in 1921, giving it the function of carrying out research and development policies for metal mining in Colorado. Nothing much happened; so in 1937 the Mineral Resources Board was created and a tax of one-tenth of 1 percent was placed on metal-liferous minerals to finance this Board. Among the functions of this organization is the achievement of the geologic mapping of the state, a basic service to persons who would explore for new mineral supplies. Yet only about 25 percent of the state has been properly mapped. Other maps are out-of-date, incomplete, and based on fragmentary data. But the Metal Mining Fund shows little initiative and less success in providing these basic public services to encourage the development of the mineral resources of the state. During the last three years this Fund has spent from its mining tax revenues \$17,000 to \$25,000 per year for personnel and from \$6,000 to \$9,000 for operating expenses and travel, but only \$3,000-\$4,000 for "cooperative scientific work." An annual expenditure of \$12,000 for investigations and mapping in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey has been financed from an appropriation from the general revenues of the state and not from taxes on the mines themselves.

Perhaps one reason for the failure of this agency is that it has the same permanent secretary as the Colorado Mining Association—a private trade organization. Perhaps another reason is that the rich, absentee mining corporations are not interested in helping to finance state facilities for mapping, research, and allied services which would assist the small, local operators to overcome the

serious financial and technical difficulties which accompany the discovery and development of new deposits and new minerals. The Colorado minerals industry as a whole could benefit from scientific activities of the state government even if the fortunate few do not require it. State assistance, however, should take the form of effective scientific and technical aid, not the nostrums of tariffs, quotas, and escapes from fair taxes.

The people of Colorado have tolerated the under-taxation of metal mining for decades and thereby have lost irretrievably a large part of their natural heritage. If Governor Gilpin had put into practice some of his bold views about the superior wisdom and energy of men of the mountain country when he was Territorial Governor in 1861, he and his contemporaries might have built up a Permanent Endowment Fund for Education when metal mining in Colorado was in its heyday. During its history Colorado has produced some \$2.25 billion of gold, silver, copper, lead, and zinc, so that a permanent endowment fund could easily have reached the sum of 100 to \$150 million. Instead, nearly all of this tremendous fortune was taken out of Colorado and dissipated in Hope diamonds, yachts, and Park Avenue penthouses. Even the philanthropies derived from Colorado mineral wealth went mainly to Eastern foundations and institutions.

But it is idle to worry over the mistakes of the past. What is needed in the present is to correct the inequities and injustices of unequal state taxation without delay. For justice delayed is justice denied. More than a million Coloradans will pay more than their fair share of state taxes this year, because a few dozen large-scale, absentee corporations are paying less than a fair share. An Occupation Tax on various types of mining would be a positive step toward the achievement of equity in taxation. The complete revision of our state tax system necessarily must proceed by steps. This should be one of the first.

## Two poems

WILLIAM GOODREAU

### OBJECT LESSON

Actually the truth of anything  
Is purposeless, unless it has a setting,  
Has a house which was built  
Beside huge trees and gardens  
With vegetables and many flowers—that is,  
A place where things can happen.  
No room can be empty or very clean.  
There should be chairs that need  
Reupholstery, having faded in the sun,  
And objects brought home at some expense  
From a silversmith in Amsterdam,  
From the estate of an aunt  
You never cared about—a mahogany  
Chest or secretary that is stained.

Rooms should be arranged to accommodate  
The angry, the ugly and the dull.  
They should be places where,  
If you are in love, you may enter  
And touch the fabric of a drape  
Or the glaze of something porcelain  
And be contained.

## SO GROWS THE TREE

Just for a time the green filigree  
Of Time in the sun's hand will lose its grip  
And tip the pointed ladder in the tree.  
Your father's pocket-watch will stop and slip  
Behind the clouds. And you will say, "His tick-  
And-tock has ended. Let us duly pray."  
At that time you'll leave your work to nick  
The heart carved in the tree, giving away  
Your place about the foliage and heat  
Of early day. The sun will fall through leaves  
Like lead fruit tumbling at your weathered feet,  
Crashing in pastureland. Then Time will cleave  
Above your father's grave. Left far behind  
In rows of hollyhock and vine you'll wake  
Your dreaming bride while sun and moon unwind.  
You'll teach your boy to climb the tree and break  
Through limbs of Time. And it will strike you then,  
As clocks the hour, how children shake you free  
And shock the sun. How all broad daylight bends  
In one enormous arc to grip this tree.



# The witch of Tuna-le-Willow

HARRIS DOWNEY

There were a number of roads into Tuna-le-Willow if one counted the cinder lanes that wound in from the farmlands; but, once touching the village, most of them lost their identity at some bottom or corner where the cinders gave way to cobble or tarmac; where, at a curving or turning, lanes became streets. Of roads that passed through the village, there were only two and they merged into each other to become one (or, some might say, to make a third).

This is how it was. One road entered the village from the southeast; another from the southwest. The two converged at an angle in the middle of the village and ran out, as one road, directly to the north.

These roads were of tarmac. In the village they had neither corners nor turns; only the convergence at the angle marked any change of direction. These roads were the shafts that held Tuna-le-Willow in the framework of the nation.

Before the threat of invasion by troops from the air or the sea, there had been signs giving mileage and directions to other places—attestments that the roads' interests went beyond Tuna-le-Willow.

Though these roads passed the market places and most of the public houses, they never became streets. The village was large but not large enough to assimilate them, not even to delay or to bend them. They were highways, impersonal and alien. They led to other places. Villagers, coming from the pubs on Saturday night or emerging from the narrow streets towards the church on Sunday morning, would stop their conversation or their reverie as they approached any of the roads. Pausing at the curb, they would look right and left, then would walk, more hurriedly than usual, across the tarmac—conversation or reverie surrendered for the while to the detachment and the tempo of the road.

Near the apex of the angle where the two roads converged, stood

the church. It was ancient. In front of it was a triangular plot separated from its yard by a street. And in the yard there were graves, the old ones at the front of the brownstone building, some at its sides, and some in the walk itself. Behind the church were the more recent graves, stretching, as with time, along the diverging iron palings. There was no paling at the rear of the church; it had probably given way to the advance of the graves. Nor was there any at the front of the church, though gateposts suggested that once there had been. In front of the churchyard ran the aforementioned street, its ancient cobbles stretching towards its ends to become lost under the tarmac of the two roads. The isosceles triangle of turf formed by this street and the converging roads was called *the Village Square*.

In the center of the triangle there was a large boulder. Under the boulder there was a grave. And in that grave lay the body of a witch. It was not purpose but circumstance that put Helga's grave in front of the church. Neither the villagers nor their ancestors had ever considered the irreconcilability of these two domains. Sometimes Helga had powers, sometimes the church. That's simply all there was to it. What Helga was to God or God to Helga, no one cared. In fact, no one ever thought of it at all, not even the Reverend Mister Higgins, to whom there was always available better exempla than witches for a sermon against sin.

Besides, Helga had been dead for three hundred years. She had been hanged in the village square, and there she had been buried. All that while she had been silent beneath her grey boulder. She was a suitable witch for Tuna-le-Willow, a quiet village that (even through the uncertainty of war, when any night it might become Coventry) kept a countenance of calm. Its garments of war hung upon it as familiarly as the alpaca coat upon the bony shoulders of the town clerk. There was nothing about its garments that made them seem "for occasion." Nothing new, nothing shiny. As soon as donned, they were matter-of-course. Indeed, they were garments well worn—faded, patched, and a little soiled. Regimentation, conscription, rationing, the blackout—all were absorbed into Tuna-le-Willow's way of life, affecting it profoundly but not changing its character. For, truly, even the roads to Manchester and London had never changed that.

But its routine, its assurance in its routine, its assurance in itself

were to be changed. Aye, Tuna-le-Willow was to struggle against the change; but the struggle would be wayward, for the forces against it would never be clearly defined.

On a dark and blacked-out winter night, there was such an invasion that Tuna-le-Willow had never dreamed of.

Of course everyone knew that the Americans were coming. For months engineers had been working on a camp site four miles north of the village. Most of the laborers lived in the village or in the surrounding countryside. Among the Royal Air Force men who wandered in from the camp there had been American soldiers. These were few. Along with the two American military policemen (familiar figures at the village square), they had been absorbed into the quiet life of the village. Their tight-fitting trousers and tunics were no longer an object of curiosity. The rhythmical movements of their long legs, the wistful gaze touching women, the soft whistles of admiration, the feline languor and the feline curiosity of their leisure—these were no longer contradictions to a preconceived idea of American character.

But then, one December evening, on the road from the southwest, there emerged from the grey sooty fog an olive-drab truck, shafting its yellow lights like a monstrous insect's antennae. Slowly it came, feeling its way through the fog; and, behind it, on and on, others followed—their dimmed lights halting at the apex of the square and then stretching down the black tarmac to the north.

The next day was clear. Up the same road, just before dark, came a second convoy. Thirty-five trucks, thirty-six, twenty-nine—the totals differed among those who counted; but no one argued the number. It was against *security* to speak of such things.

A Transportation Office was set up in the railway station, and each day there arrived small groups of American soldiers, or soldiers and officers, who clambered out of the compartments lugging musette bags, tin helmets, carbines, valpacks, and who (standing on the platform among all the paraphernalia) would look round, orienting themselves against the signs of *Oxo* and *Bovril*. One would say "This is it, fellers" or "Here we go again." Else someone would echo the sign of the giraffe with the bottle lodged in his gullet: "Oh Goodness, My Guinness!"

Tuna-le-Willow could not hold its identity against the olive-drab vehicles, the khaki, the chewing gum, and the jive. But this

wasn't dangerous. Some day, the uniforms and the vehicles would move down that road by which they came. Gum and chocolate would be no more. The odd vernacular would become a memory.

So, Tuna-le-Willow only shrugged its alpaca shoulder.

The pubs were crowded, but the English like the intimacy of close quarters. The beer was scarce, but it never ran out. The girls, forgetting the Tommy in India or Italy, kissed the Yanks in the black alleys and under the yellow lights of the station. But this too would pass. The villagers winked at one another. Survival was at stake. They and the Yanks were in this thing together.

Yet, as the weeks went by, the villagers became restless at the presence of Americans. (Not the girls, nor the children, but nearly all the men and nearly all the settled women and the old women—those on whom depended the dignity of the village.) In their cogitations, the villagers sought the cause of the restlessness, but they discovered nothing. How could they divine that their distrust came from a growing trust? And their fear, from admiration?

The Yanks said *Sir* and *Ma'am* to their elders. Their pound notes were drawn from their wallets without ostentation. They trusted their silver on the counter. Their stories of America (full of praise but rarely boastful) were prompted by a nostalgia for home—a patriotism that Englishmen understand and respect. Confidence in themselves and their country was a matter of course. . . . And they were full of laughter.

These villagers, who knew that their place in England was the best place in England and that England was, of course, the best place in the world—these earth-loving villagers came to know men who, knowing them in return and knowing their England, still knew that their spot in America was the best spot in America and that America, of course, was the best spot in the world. Therein lay the cause of the villagers' fear and their restlessness, not the fear that some other place might be better than theirs, but that they might come to think so. But this cause they never consciously accepted. Who was there so unpatriotic as to discover such cause?

In the mornings, before dawn, the village heard the roar of the planes rising higher and higher and then hovering directly above it as the closer roar of an individual plane moved over the rooftops, vibrating rafters and then fading away into the great hovering roar high above just as another roared aloft towards the auricu-

lar unity. Then another, and another. . . . One listened, his consciousness treading above the abyss of sleep to count three or five or seven and to be assured of the safety that vigilance keeps. Then comfortably one sank again into slumber.

No. Whatever restlessness the Yanks might provoke, nothing would be spoken against them. They were colorful, generous, polite—as inoffensive as any body of troops might be. And they adored one's children, snotty-nosed or stinking of urine. It was one's duty, not only to accept them, but to make them feel wanted, even loved.

They crowded the streets and the pubs; they stole the girls. They carved their initials on the circle railings of the picture palace and, disrespectful of paths, they trampled the roses in Briddle Park and broke the rhododendron. But how trivial these things when in other places, not always far away, houses were bombed and people killed!

They appropriated the Crown Hotel and made it an enlisted men's club. In the lupine bed of the Park they built a kiosk for their Military Police. One would rather they had not found it necessary to do such things; but, then, one also would wish that rationing were not at his table like a hungry bear. So nothing was said. Queuing was a deserving enough evil to grouse about—and the scarcity of food and fuel and clothes. At least for a time, these things were enough. If one needed an alien sinner to damn, there were always the Italian internees nine miles down the southeast road.

Nonetheless, tension grew in the presence of khaki. The villagers became dour. A melancholia fell upon them. In the market place, the streets, the park, they were sullen. Even in the pub, where their vitality, endurance, and love of fellowship had been apparent in a gesture of the hand, the expression of a face, the turn of a phrase at the first sip of beer—even there in their black-curtained pubs they, at last, became silent and sick-at-heart.

Bad luck overtook Tuna-le-Willow. Milk became poor. The land yielded less and less. Hens laid hardly at all. Porkers grew scrawny. Only the rabbits produced; every night they came from the woods to eat the sprouts and the greens. Of course feed and fertilizer were scarce. Of course rabbits had ceased being game when no buckshot could be had. The villagers thought of these

things but knew that they could not be the whole cause of their travail. Perhaps the roar of the planes affected the stock! Perhaps. But what of the land?

Then came more inexplicable things. . . . Mysteries!

The first came to Mr. Diggs, a farmer whose land bordered the American camp. His hens ceased to lay. This fact he attributed in part to the roar of the planes and in part to the scarcity of feed. He could only grin and bear. But then his hens began to disappear. He would not admit to what he attributed this fact. He made no complaint. But he did take caution. He repaired his hen house, then made certain that his chickens came in to roost, rounding them out of the hedgerows and from the low limbs of trees. And he locked the door. Then one morning, while setting the kettle on the fire, he glanced out the window and saw that his chickens were up, and out in the yard. Such was his excitement that he rushed to the hen house before taking his tea. The door was locked. He looked round. The hen house was intact, no exit for even a pullet. He unlocked the door as excitedly and as quickly as if he expected to catch the culprit in his crime. There, sitting on the roosts, where his chickens ought to have been, were his white pigeons—at any rate, a number of them. Five or six. He was too stunned to count. As soon as he stepped from the door, they flew out the house to their own cote.

"I'll bloody well see the bloody authorities this very day," he cried.

"Stop cursing, Dan," his wife said. "It's a sin in the face of the Lord. And besides, ye've no pass."

"And what would I want with a *pass*?"

"To get by the guards at the gate," she said.

"And did I mean *them* as authorities?" He nodded his head towards the camp. "Me *own* authorities, I'll see. Of me own bloody country."

"Stop cursing," she said.

"I'll see the constabulary, then they take the matter to *them*." Again he nodded his fiery head towards the camp.

"Aye," she said, turning away to the stove. "Tapel!" A weariness of years was in the tone of her word. "With them as with ourselves as well."

After lunch, Mr. Diggs shaved, put on his fusty Sunday suit, and

started towards Tuna-le-Willow. As he walked along the lane that skirted the airfield, he saw the Americans at the runways in their green overalls and leather jackets, in their tight khaki trousers and green jackets; some standing, some walking about, and others lying or sitting on the grass. He knew the phrase: they were "sweating it out." He heard the distant roar of planes. All the soldiers turned towards the sound, then moved to appointed places: to fire trucks, and motor-scooters, and ambulances. Mr. Diggs stopped and looked through the mesh of the fence. A sadness rose in him. How many of the planes that went out in the dawn would now be returning? How many mothers'-sons would be lying in cockpits maimed or dead? Such feelings always interfered with a man's justice. An American soldier came down the cinders on a bike. "Howdy, sir," he said.

"Howdy, son," the old man answered. His voice had quavered. He was afraid he might cry.

He was being a fool, he reckoned. And thankful in his reckoning, he turned from the fence and walked after the bicycle, towards home.

"It ain't them," he said to his wife. "It's just come to come," and his voice was sad. "It's something weird. Like the planes that come out of the sky, home again. It's like something out of a dream. It's something weird." The *something weird* was a subterfuge. He could not reveal his soft heart. He had been too staunchly determined about seeing authorities. Giving an excuse for his change, he fooled not only his wife but also himself. As soon as he gave utterance to his new suspicion, he really believed that there was something weird.

"Well I never! I really never!" his wife said in her old habit of mock disappointment. She looked at him a little sadly—remembering, for some reason, the long mustaches he had had when he was young, and his old pride in their golden reflections under a paraffin light.

Daniel told his story in the village and, whenever he finished, he said: "But it ain't them. I know it ain't them." Everyone understood whom he meant by *them*. And everyone looked a little surprised, yet a little credulous, at his final utterance: "It's something weird."

Afterward, many weird things did indeed come to pass.



A cow belonging to a farmer named Higgins (brother of the village pastor) dropped a calf that had horns. The cow refused the calf. She kicked her legs and ran whenever it approached her. Higgins put blinds on the cow's eyes. The calf suckled; nonetheless, it withered and died.

Farmer Higgins was an atheist. His atheism didn't arise from deductions but from a distrust of his brother's piety. Having no more tedium for the church than most men, he would never have been known as an atheist at all—except for the fact of being his brother's brother. Naturally, the incident of the horned calf was explained as a symbol of God's (or of the Devil's) even by those who had no more belief in God and his Devil than did the good farmer himself.

Such pulpit words as *apostasy* and *recusancy* were culled from the minds of the clerks, rubbed with spittle, displayed in the market place, and handed about in the pubs—always remaining somewhat stiff and pretentious, like the hard collars and the black ties of the very same clerks. Allusions were made to the Calends of January and to the ancient Esbats and Sabbats. Such gossip, though as contradictory as the domains of Helga and the church, would normally have explained the visitation of the horned calf. But other things happened—and too quickly for assimilation into retribution or justice or humor.

Mrs. Maria Leghorn—whose late father had been a literary gentleman, whose late husband had been a landowner, and whose eighteen-year-old daughter had been sent to visit an aunt in Devonshire because of an attachment for an American gunner—this very distinguished and decorous Mrs. Leghorn had an inexplicable experience. "Frightful," she said. One morning she discovered that all the book jackets in her library were transposed: the Dickens jackets on Shakespeare, the Correlli on the Disraeli, a Shelley on—of all things—a Jane Austen. "Perfectly frightful!" The maid swore that she'd swear on the Bible (the only book in its right jacket) that she had changed nothing in her dusting. Certainly, Mrs. Leghorn could not dispute her maid, who had been threatening to go to her uncle in Cornwall until after the war and who never dusted at all except when she, Mrs. Leghorn, worked beside her. "There're no servants to be had any more, no depend-



able servants." In fact, there was nothing, nothing at all in this world, that one could depend on any more.

Mr. Billings, keeper of the Bull, discovered that a keg of his bitters was empty. He remembered that the night before he had rolled it near the pump in case it be needed. "What with the Yanks drinking so much near the closing!" He had not had to untap it. Yet the next morning—untapped, it was empty.

A rat (it was said to be a rat) ate off the nose of a dairyman's infant.

Old Matey Field, who lived alone in a hut two miles from the village, declared that one evening, while she was out in the yard, a black man appeared, caught her skirts, threw them over her head, and, holding her, stuck her belly a thousand times with a pin. The fright was so great that, from that day forward, Matey was considered more shattered than ever before.

An epidemic of barn gum broke out. *Shingles* was the doctor's word; but *barn gum* it was called: the red barn gum, the white barn gum, the fiery barn gum.

Misfortunes were too quick and numerous. There must be a cause.

Then one day (How had it never been noticed before?) a young sailor, home on leave, lifted his hand as he stared at the trucks in the square and exclaimed: "Helga's out! They've rolled the rock from her gravel!"

The Yanks, using the triangular plot as a traffic point, had maneuvered the boulder to one side.

After the sailor's hysterical cry, some of the villagers felt that Helga, resenting the desecration of her resting place, was seeking revenge. Others believed that the removal of the boulder had only set her free for her old tricks. Of course there were skeptics. They poo-pooed the whole business; but none of them recognized Helga as metonymy, a subrogation, a palimpsest, a sublimation, or what you will. If they did, they remained silent, feeling perhaps that superstition would offer more therapy for the village's despair than would knowledge.

A delegation of citizens, white-collar and conservative, called upon the Commanding Officer of the American Base. The young colonel, wide-eyed and skeptical, said, "I understand." He apologized. Immediately, the stone would be replaced.

The three gentlemen left. The colonel called the Military Police in Tuna-le-Willow. When the delegation, in their borrowed Humber, approached the square from the north road, they saw that the boulder had been returned to its place. They congratulated one another for their efficiency and, scraping the curb, nearly ran the little auto into the apex of the square as they turned down the southwest road.

That night, from the church, a colored window (one with naked cherubs floating about on tiny wings and clasping white lilies in their chubby hands) fell into the churchyard, frame and all, and crashed irreparably against the gravestone of one Philip Reems.

Within a fortnight, two other things, as inexplicable, made the village gape (though, in normal times, the first would have provoked only hilarity and the second have aroused a mild interest in fertilizers and the cycles of weather).

Two geese that disappeared from a farm miles away were encountered going down a street in the village as if they were old rustics on a Bank Holiday seeking a frugal bedding-and-breakfast. Then, one night, the pippins from Farmer Drove's forty-odd trees fell to the ground. All green; nor canker nor worm to be found among them.

Yes, Helga was still abroad, and more restless than ever. No one should ever have presumed to turn the stone that for three hundred years had honored her grave.

Despite the repeated successes of the Allies on the Continent, the village remained sullen. People grew crabbed, short-tempered. There were no enemy planes overhead any more; the buzz-bombs had not yet begun. But Helga threatened like precipice. No one knew where she would strike next, or when her mischievousness would become terror.

Something had to be done.

Doctor Brill Greenlaugh, soft-talking (talking posh), tall, thin, and ancient, came from London. He was the world's most famous thaumatologist. "That's to say," said the more learned of the village, "he's a scientist. No hocus-pocus, no image making. But real craft—like an engineer poking the innards of a sick Wellington." It's to be understood that neither these learned men nor the ordinary citizens inclined their logic to sorcery. It was only the avalanche of little misfortunes among them (all facts) and

the incident of uncovering Helga's grave (an indisputable fact) that brought the wonders and the evils of magic into their consciousness. Their suspicions were different from the old superstitions regarding prophets and familiars. Their experience was a *phenomenon*.

Nonetheless, the critical attitude that they had about Helga's escape did not prevent their expecting the representative from the Society of Psychical Research to perform some mystical rite which would exorcise Helga to her wonted spot under the boulder.

The scientist, however, was a disappointment—despite his distinction and his little goat's beard. He spent three days in Tuna-le-Willow. Whatever he sought, no one ever knew. He looked and listened, expressionless; only nodding his head or blowing on his spectacles as he considered some evidence that ought to have popped his watery eyes. No one could imagine what went on in his mind. No one recalled that, years ago, he was a member of the Trans-Asiatic Expedition (eight thousand miles from Beirut, through Damascus, Baghdad, and Kabul in motors, through India to Kashmir and, upon yaks, into Turkestan and over the vast Karakoram of the Himalayas to the Burzil Pass and at last into Peiping). No one surmised that, when his eyes flashed round the boulder, he was thinking of a Mongol princess with her hunting eagle at Urumchi. Otherwise there would have been a whisper *He's off his pot*; and all would have turned to the closest pub.

The years ago, it was the Princess Nirgidma of Torhut, who, in answer to the young and handsome anthropologist's question *Why do occidentals and orientals so dislike one another?* dropped the closure of her yurt and replied: "People seek to protect not only property, but modes of life." She had shaken her head and the little pot that was her crown had sat on her hair with a certainty matched only by a certainty of her words: "Perhaps your way of life is right for you, but it threatens ours."

Even had the villagers been able to read this memory in the old doctor's mind, they could never have understood—not having his knowledge of subsequent truths which assured him that even *within* the East and the West there are conflicting modes. After all, what could Srinagar have to do with Tuna-le-Willow when they had not reconciled Lancashire to Devon?

When Doctor Greenlaugh looked up from the boulder, his face

was a mask. They had expected no more. Yet someone questioned his authority: "Doctor?"

There was no answer. Only the academic shake of the head and a yellow tongue from out dentures misting the wire-rounded spectacles.

It was nine weeks after he left that the Society sent a copy of his report to Tuna-le-Willow. It was a summary of Helga's life and death and of the recent misfortunes that befell the village. The conclusion was this: "The mischief of the Witch Helga is a common and ordinary thaumaturgical manifestation, inexplicable and harmless."

Surely a couple of old clerks, even without the benefit of a Mongol princess, knew the secret of the hysteria. "It's that chewing gum mostly," they would doubtless have said. "Or Bung Crosby." But to assert that Tuna-le-Willow was fearful of an alien culture capturing its own would have been treason.

So the village accepted the Greenlaugh report, its acceptance leaning heavily on adjectives: *ordinary* and *harmless*. After all there was a war, and the buzz-bombs had begun their violent descents.

Lelia Leghorn, big with child, came out of Devonshire and married Corporal Heat, all with her mother's blessing and amidst a thousand fern-laced lupines that made the Reverend Mister Higgins put his finger to his nose and sneeze.

Somehow the fear of Helga had been wrong. Poor wretch, done in by a judgment as ignorant as she!

The jeeps maneuvered round her boulder in search of a spot to park. American soldiers carved the soft stone: *Johnny Adams fought the war here.*

Each day that the weather was willing, a string of Fortresses roared into the dawn. In the silence of afternoon tea, they came sputtering back; and the village, setting down its cup or its biscuit, would count the returns just as intently as it had counted the take-offs at dawn. "Good weather for flying, this is," one might say. Or, surrendering to affection: "Seems they're *all* in, more's the blessing."

## STALEMATE

By JAMES BINNEY

Who breaks a stalemate of stale world,  
reheats a mouldy planet, crumbly one,  
sets others boiling with the primal heat,  
serves white-hot moonlight?  
Who cuts the genteel wind with earthy cursing,  
insults the pious sun?  
Wild wind is wailing on the white hot shore.

I love to hear of bold Odysseus  
long on his voyage. Lovely Penelope  
waiting—and a sea's rage impending,  
and waiting world—age after age  
for a promised coming. Dante  
walking in heaven and hell, talking  
with carnal lovers—Francesca de Rimini  
tossed by outrageous winds—  
I love to hear of fount lands,  
and the saved lost. Virgins seven,  
Beatrice the eternal.  
But the loves of tomorrow?  
Who breaks the stalemate of stale world?

## Three poems

JACK ANDERSON

### UNMASKED PLAYER

I cannot tonight; there'll be no show:  
my mask is broken, my domino  
has fallen into tatters. Go

home now, please. I would not dare  
to dance like this; you would not care  
to see me as I am, so bare

of all theatrical pretence  
as to frighten my audience  
with more than *Guignol* violence

in dramas which are really real.  
Un-rouged, un-powdered, I'd reveal  
all that I am, when to conceal

with trills and tra-la-las is art,  
changing the self to fit the part—  
while here, no act but life will start,

unrehearsed. Then why do you stay?  
Aren't you listening to what I say?  
Applause! But this is not a play!

## STAMPS

Pearl-divers and the Moscow subway.  
Kings and crocodiles among  
giraffes, popes, and swastikas.  
Country of dolls and obese Buddhas  
tranquil beneath the cherry blossoms;  
or, other-oceanwards, the wooden  
footsteps on the cobblestones  
and windmills guarding tulip beds.

The colored squares. Intimations  
of life unwashed behind the ears.  
Spices. Pineapples. Parakeets.  
Visions abounded. The eye was young.  
Sailing in the Golden Hind,  
riding zebras across the desert,  
saving stamps. The scraps of paper  
building spun-sugar continents.

Then scraps were scraps. The attic made  
its claims. (Erector sets and blocks.)  
Not knowing why. A text too closely  
read. An over-cancellation.  
Perhaps. Simple as that. A mote  
of ugliness. Then vermined worlds.  
Tannu Tuova, Madagascar,  
Aden—dirty streets and flies.

## LAMENT

Once, seven Sundays filled my holy week  
And days were beads of rosaries, a string  
Of seasons stretching from the winter's bleak  
Entombment to the resurrected spring.  
My vows were taken in each breath I drew,  
And I, upon eternal pilgrimage,  
Would walk in Zion building ever-new  
Jerusalems, not noticing that age,  
Efficient executioner, had bound  
My youth with strongest ropes, so quietly  
He worked. Then I glanced up and found  
My mangled childhood broken on a tree,  
While I remained, forever bereft of grace.  
Now even Sunday wears a Monday face.



## Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago"

GERHARD LOOSE

The story of the publication, recognition, and denunciation of Boris Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago* (Pantheon Books, 1958) is weird and illuminating. In 1954, the manuscript was accepted by the Soviet State Publishing house, and the foreign rights were sold to the Italian publisher Gian Giacomo Feltrinelli. When the "thaw"—the granting of some freedom of expression after Stalin's death in 1953—suddenly ended after the Hungarian uprising in 1956, the Soviet publishers requested that the manuscript be returned for "revision." Feltrinelli refused, and the Italian edition appeared in 1957. Its success was instantaneous and astounding. Within a year, the novel appeared in numerous translations.

On October 23, 1958, the Royal Swedish Academy unanimously voted Pasternak the Nobel Prize for Literature, citing his "important achievement both in contemporary lyric poetry and in the field of the great Russian epic tradition." The poet cabled his acceptance: "Immensely thankful, touched, proud, astonished, abashed."

Soviet reaction was immediate and violent. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of October 25 called the award "a hostile act . . . against the Soviet Union," designed to "fan the cold war." The Royal Swedish Academy was characterized as a group of "bourgeois connoisseurs . . . of international reaction." Pasternak's novel was described as an "artistically squalid, malicious work replete with hatred of socialism." *Pravda* followed the next day. Zaslavsky, one of its commentators, called Pasternak a "counterrevolutionary," an "ungifted individual who deliberately made himself a tool of reactionary bourgeois propaganda" and who had produced a "moral monstrosity," a "political lampoon." The awarding committee was found to be composed of "rank reactionaries of literature, militant obscurantists, enemies of democracies, advocates of war." (It is noteworthy that the committee's competence was not similarly impugned when, only two years before, it had

given the prize to Halldór Laxness, the Icelandic novelist, who is strongly sympathetic to communism.) Zaslavsky began to apply the pressure. He demanded rejection of the award but pronounced himself doubtful because Pasternak "lacks even a spark of Soviet dignity and is without a shred of patriotism in his soul." The next day the Writers Union expelled Pasternak, thus depriving him of official standing and thereby jeopardizing his professional future.

Two days later, on October 29, Pasternak cabled the Nobel Prize Committee: "Because of the meaning attributed to this award in the society I live in I ought to say 'No thanks' to the undeserved prize awarded me. Do not take my voluntary refusal with any ill will."

Yet the hounding continued. On October 31, Moscow Radio urged Pasternak (in ten languages) to leave the Soviet Union. "Let him go where he wishes. No Soviet man or woman wants to breathe the air he breathes." *Tass* suggested that he "experience personally 'all the fascination of the capitalist paradise.'" On the same day, a rally was held at which Khrushchev and other high government officials were present. Semichastny, the leader of the Young Communist League, delivered a violent attack on Pasternak. Then the Moscow section of the Writers Union resolved to petition the government to divest Pasternak of his citizenship, "an act that would be tantamount to expulsion."

This was a grim farce because Pasternak is known to be passionately, inseparably attached to his native land and his people. (Zhivago says: "A grown man should share his country's fate. To me, it is obvious.") He anticipated the Union's official petition by addressing a letter to the "Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to Nikita S. Khrushchev" in which he said: "Leaving my motherland would equal death for me. . . . With my hand on my heart, I can say that I have done something for Soviet literature and can be useful for it in the future."

The situation also had a light aspect. On the day after the rally Feltrinelli arrived in The Hague to arrange for the official publication of the original version of the book. An unauthorized printing had allegedly taken place and numerous copies had been distributed by the Vatican Information Service at the Brussels World Fair, twelve hundred of which had supposedly reached the

Soviet Union. A spokesman for the Vatican denied any collusion.

The pressure on Pasternak evidently continued. On November 6, he addressed a letter to *Pravda*. Now realizing that the award had been "political," he was "mistaken" in welcoming it. "With bright faith in my future generally, being proud of the times in which I live and the people who surround me, I believe I shall find in myself the strength to restore my good name and the lost trust of my comrades."

Pasternak was given no respite, seemingly because he had not surrendered his pride completely. Zaslavsky, turning literary, composed a parable. A snake crawling out of dung water threatens a high-flying proud eagle (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, November 7). Since then the Soviet papers have been quiet about Pasternak, while adding an ironic twist to the tragic comedy by their enthusiastic reception of the Nobel Prize for three Russian physicists.

These considerations can at best have been only contributory. The crux of the matter is the Soviets' contradictory attitude toward the intellectual. It is in the Marxist tradition to hold the intelligentsia (a Russian word!) in high esteem. Within the Communist orbit, they do enjoy an extraordinary measure of material recognition, considerable privileges, and high prestige. Their function is considered vitally important: to forge and wield the ideological weapon, to be the "engineers" and the "leaders" of the soul. Therefore, they are closely watched for bourgeois retrogression, deviationism, and heterodoxy. The role they played in the Hungarian uprising will not be forgotten soon in Moscow.

Noteworthy is the case of Dimitri Shostakovich, whose work was severely criticized on ideological grounds on two occasions. As Pasternak does not compare in cultural or political importance with the composer, the rabid criticism heaped upon the novelist was ultimately meant as a warning for the intelligentsia generally.

The question remains why the Soviet authorities have reacted so violently, turning *Doctor Zhivago* into a literary *cause célèbre* instead of contemptuously disclaiming it as a manifestation of bourgeois deviationism and literary decadence. One answer is that Soviet authorities, despite their sledge hammer protestations, are also sensitive. They certainly remember that the first Russian

writer ever to receive the Nobel Prize was the émigré Ivan Bunin. And since Mikhail Sholokhov, whose *The Silent Don* is a novel of imposing stature, has been denied this recognition, they probably surmised political motivation in the selection of Pasternak, a Soviet writer of uncertain political loyalty. Aggravating too was the circumstance that the novel has been turned into ammunition for the Cold War by the wide publicity given to such passages in the novel as this one:

Marxism is too uncertain of its ground to be a science. Sciences are more balanced, more objective. I don't know a movement more self-centered and further removed from the facts than Marxism. Everyone is worried only about proving himself in practical matters, and as for the men in power, they are so anxious to establish the myth of their infallibility that they do their utmost to ignore the truth. (p. 259)

Although this story of praise and disavowal has received considerable publicity, the man involved is but little known. He was born in Moscow in 1890. His mother was a musician, his father a painter and friend of great men of letters like Tolstoi, Rilke, etc. In 1925, his father went into voluntary exile in England. He died in Oxford in 1945.

Young Pasternak was greatly gifted. The turning point of his career came in 1912, when his major concerns changed from music to poetry and from law to philosophy. He studied in Germany for two years, returning to Russia at the outbreak of World War I. He did not serve, owing to physical inability; instead, he worked in a factory in the Urals. After the revolution, he was for a time with the Commissariat for Education, and then became a professional writer. In 1946, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party, led by Zhdanov, leveled its massive criticism of widespread political aloofness and bourgeois tendencies in the arts, Pasternak was among those to be chastised specifically. His poetry was characterized as "apolitical. . . , devoid of ideas and severed from the people's life." Since then he has published only translations.

His first major works were two collections of poetry: *My Sister Life* (written in 1917, published in 1922) and *Variations and Themes* (1923). *The Year 1905* is a cycle of poems dealing with

incidents and figures of the revolutionary uprising. It is Pasternak's first attempt at coping with a political theme. *Second Birth* appeared in 1932. *Wide Earth*, 1945, reveals the strong imprint of World War II on his later poetry.

Even in translation, the poems are eminently readable. They exhibit vigor and originality of thought, lyric intensity, and felicitous use of the daring contrast and the bold metaphor. The politically oriented poetry is apparently unavailable in English.

Pasternak is also a prose writer of note. *Aerial Ways* (1925) is a collection of four short stories. *Safe Conduct* is an extensive and very illuminating autobiographical sketch. *Selected Writings* (New Directions: New York, 1949) contains an introduction, the autobiography, four short narratives, and thirty-seven poems.

Although the *Soviet Encyclopedia* is very uncertain of the merits of his poetry and fails to mention his prose, it names Pasternak as a "distinguished translator." The translations include the works of Georgian poets, of Shakespeare, Goethe, Kleist, Rilke, and the Hungarian Petöfi. Of his work, only the translations are presently in print in the Soviet Union.

*Doctor Zhivago* is an authentic account of pre-war and revolutionary Russia. It was written by a man who lived through both eras, passionately engaged yet not beholden to doctrine or party, and endowed with a truly epic talent. The account is very close to the event but has historic perspective, and for a relatively long and detailed novel the essential facts are few and clear.

This is the story: Dark shadows fell on Yurii Andreievich Zhivago's early boyhood: his mother died and his father committed suicide. The youth was taken to Moscow in 1905, at a historically crucial moment, for when Russia lost the war against Japan a revolution broke out. Yurii lived with his uncle, of the cultured middle class, and as he grew older, became deeply involved in the aspirations of the intelligentsia. Although he inclined to writing, he studied medicine because he felt he ought to do something useful. He married his cousin.

During World War I, Zhivago served as a medical officer in Galicia, dutifully, but without enthusiasm. He welcomed the revolution of 1917; he was impressed by its sweep and fervor. His

meeting with Lara, an army nurse, with whom he had a fateful encounter when she was a girl, foreshadows a grave human conflict.

Zhivago returns to Moscow. The atmosphere is one of uncanny aloofness. The old order and the new life exist side by side until the Bolshevik seizure of power draws them into the fratricidal strife of the civil war. The events reveal the dilemma. Zhivago

realized that he was a pygmy before the monstrous machine of the future; he was anxious about this future, and loved it and was secretly proud of it, ready to sacrifice himself for the general good, and could do nothing. (p. 184)

In the depth of winter, in the midst of the revolutionary chaos, he and his family trek to eastern Siberia to escape the "machine of the future." Zhivago devotes his energies to physical survival and the realization of his creative powers. But the "machine" catches up with him. He is forced to serve as a physician with the Red partisans. The inexorable realities of the revolution convince him beyond doubt that the régime demands unquestioning loyalty and stringent discipline, conformity as an artist, and that Marxism is a doctrine which leaves his spiritual needs unfulfilled and which violates his sensibilities.

He makes his escape after almost two years among the partisans, only to learn that his family has been forced to emigrate to France. He once again finds Lara, whose husband has left her to fight in World War I and, later, to become a leader of the partisans. Lara and Zhivago are drawn to each other but as they remain loyal to their attachments, it may seem that the reader is to accept an improbable, jingling double triangle. Actually, it is the story of the consummation of a love which had grown since adolescence. The intense fulfillment also leads to the maturing of Zhivago's poetic genius.

The dread of revolutionary persecution is ever present. Lara allows herself, her daughter, and the unborn child to be saved. Zhivago stays behind, desperate, on the verge of madness. But he senses that he can survive and create only in the great city, at the center of the historic event. He leaves the deadly vastness of Siberia for Moscow.

He lives there for seven years. His companion is a woman of the people who bears him two children. Scientific writing provides the material support. The best hours are devoted to the creative effort. Not yet forty, Zhivago is spent, burned out. One day he collapses in the street and dies.

Zhivago is convincing as a character; he is also significant as a type. He represents the Russian intellectual who sympathized with, and supported, the revolutionary movement. His motivations were a strong sense of social justice and a deep dissatisfaction with an order whose ideas, mores, and institutions were felt to be lifeless and oppressive. The poets among the intellectuals greeted the revolution enthusiastically. Blok did so in 1905 and again in 1917. He died in 1920. But there were also Mayakowski, Yesenin, and Pasternak, who welcomed, in the words of Zhivago, "this new thing, this marvel of history, this revelation." (p. 195) They were sympathizers; Trotsky approvingly called them *poputchiki* ("fellow travelers"). However, the new doctrine, the new order, filled them with doubt: "I'll say A but I won't say B whatever you do." (p. 339) and

It's only in mediocre books that people are divided into camps and have nothing to do with each other. In real life everything gets mixed up! Don't you think you'd have to be a hopeless nonentity to play only one role all your life, to have only one place in society, always to stand for the same thing? (p. 298)

The revolutionary poets rebelled against being "engineers of the soul." The conflict became irreconcilable. Yesenin committed suicide in 1925; Mayakowsky followed him five years later. Of the four great lyric poets, only Pasternak survived.

However, Zhivago suggests a good deal more than the predicament of the revolutionary poet. His concerns are essentially those of the modern artist. He senses, increasingly, the pressures to conform, the shrinking of the atmosphere of free expression.

How is the dilemma to be resolved, the choice between becoming an esoteric member of the coterie or an adjunct of the massive manipulators of the arts such as the state publishing house, the publisher contending with amorphous and fickle mass audiences



and the so-called "clubs" and "guilds." And there are these inner conflicts so very vexing to the writer: the meaning and purpose of art in our day, the creative possibility without a faith or a myth, and, at the late phase of a cultural development, the problem of the stirring question, the fitting form, the adequate medium.

This is the time when the gravely disturbed artist himself questions the *raison d'être* of art. Rimbaud turned away in disgust from his meteoric and magnificent accomplishment. Joyce was driven to an experiment—glorious, dubious, self-destructive—and Mann wrote *Dr. Faustus*, a novel about a modern composer who can create only in league with the powers of the nether world. Zhivago's problem is communism, but it is also, and most essentially so, art itself.

Zhivago thus embodies that grave spiritual dilemma of our age: the deep concern with essence and quintessence, with ultimate meaning and transcending purpose. The metaphysical inquiry has been most persistent and passionate among poets. Eliot regained the dogma and the communal security of the Church. Others found the traditional answers unacceptable. Their strong desire to believe is aggravated by the doubt of the doctrine, whatever its provenance. This skeptic will to fathom and to believe has brought about a non-dogmatic, free-wheeling kind of mysticism whose quintessential concern is life. Zhivago's vitalistic pronouncements bespeak his hostility to the Marxian philosophy and reveal the anarchistic bias of his convictions.

Reshaping life! People who can say that have never understood a thing about life—they never felt its breath, its heartbeat—however much they have seen or done. They look on it as a lump of raw material that needs to be processed by them, to be ennobled by their touch. But life is never a material, a substance to be molded . . . life is the principle of self-renewal, it is constantly renewing and remaking and changing and transfiguring itself, it is infinitely beyond your or my obtuse theories about it. (p. 338)

Man is born to live, not to prepare for life. Life itself, the phenomenon of life, the gift of life, is so breath-takingly serious. So why substitute this childish harlequinade of immature phantasies, these schoolboy escapades? (p. 297)

The novel establishes the balance between the concerns of the individual and historic forces. It derives its epic quality from a



situation in which a representative protagonist contends with the world about him. *Doctor Zhivago* sets down the life of a man in adversity. He suffers physical defeat but prevails when he realizes both in action and fact his humanity and creative genius. Thus the epic is blended with the dramatic and enriched and strengthened. We see all this in the appendix to the novel which contains the fruit and legacy of such a tragic conflict: "The poems of Yurii Zhivago."

*Doctor Zhivago* derives its striking epic quality also from a very skillful utilization of locale and historic event. The scene is first laid in the country in pre-war Russia, is then shifted to Moscow and from there to Siberia. World War I and the outbreak of the revolution are depicted at the front in Galicia, and the "Farewell to the Old" in a military hospital in Central Russia. Zhivago returns to Moscow at the time of the Bolshevik seizure of power. Later, in Siberia, he observes and participates in the civil war. He spends his final years in Moscow, at the time of the temporary compromise with capitalism (NEP—New Economic Policy).

The frequent change of locale adds variety and contrast to the narrative. Labyrinthine Moscow and the Siberian vastness are juxtaposed, in peace time and during the Revolution. The Russo-Japanese conflict and the uprisings of 1905 are convincingly treated as the precursors of World War I and the revolution of 1917. The revolutionary decision was made in the urban centers; it was gravely tested in the limitless expanse of Siberia. Zhivago, in search of himself, fled the city but irresistibly gravitated back to the center of political and cultural decision.

A large number of significantly diverse characters exhibiting the *condition humaine* of the Revolution are employed in the novel to fashion the historic event to an epic. These figures are drawn from the actively contending classes: the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, and, to a lesser degree, the peasantry.

The ideological struggle is complex. Its participants are the liberal, the revolutionary idealist, the Tolstoyan, the theosophist, the anarchist, the co-operativist, the social revolutionary, the social democrat, and the communist. They differ greatly, as to clarity of belief, power of conviction, and loyalty to faith. The October Revolution is the electric storm which clears a murky atmosphere. The Bolsheviks emerge as the commanding force

not owing to numerical strength or ideological superiority but because they engage in the political struggle with the decisive weapon, the will to power.

The civil war accomplishes the final reduction of the ideological differences, taking its toll of those left-wing elements and sympathizers who have sided with the Bolsheviks. Significant metamorphoses occur. Pasha Antipov, a radical school teacher, in a venturesome search for his true identity, becomes a leader of the partisans and in the process realizes unsuspected qualities of the soldier and the strategist. Liberius, of middle class origin, comes to embody the new historic type: the commissar. Tiverzin, a participant in the uprisings of 1905 and a Siberian exile, survives as a living artifact and pathetic idol of the revolution. The peasant types are awkwardly solid; the women especially seem inextricably bound to the earth and endowed with a primitive spirituality that is unshakable. The array of women, of city and country, is impressive. It brings to mind Merezhkowski's provocative conviction that Russia is the country of absolute feminineness.

Most of the characters are drawn into the main stream of the Revolution. But there is also the improbable exception that is capable of rising above the event: the machinator and manipulator, who, in the case of Komarovskiy, assumes an almost demonic role.

The novel is also authentic regarding its form. Its authenticity does not lie in narrative experimentation, stylistic innovation, or the discovery of new aspects of the novel's protean character. It rather results from a rare combination of talent: Pasternak is a lyric poet who has the gift of the epic. He is endowed with the true vision of the event and the instantaneous grasp of character. His power of rapid and impressive characterization is reminiscent of Dickens and, of course, Tolstoi.

There is no broad and leisurely flow of events. The narrative is rather divided into brief sequences. They are like the stones of the mosaic, which vision and mastery of the material has fashioned to a whole. These sequences at their best are as intense and plastic as a poem in prose and even in translation they suggest the poetic quality of Pasternak's style.

High winter came with its severe frosts. Torn, seemingly disconnected sounds and shapes rose out of the icy mist, stood still, moved, and

vanished. The sun was not the sun to which the earth was used, it was a changeling. Its crimson ball hung in the forest and from it, stiffly and slowly as in a dream or in a fairy tale, amber-yellow rays of light as thick as honey spread and, catching in the trees, froze to them in mid-air.

Invisible feet in felt boots, touching the ground softly with padded soles, yet making the snow screech angrily at each step, moved in all directions, while the hooded and fur-jacketed torsos belonging to them sailed separately through the upper air, like heavenly bodies. (pp. 370-71)

First signs of spring. Thaw. The air smells of buttered pancakes and vodka, as at Shrovetide. A sleepy, oily sun blinking in the forest, sleepy pines blinking their needles like eyelashes, oily puddles glistening at noon. The countryside yawns, stretches, turns over, and goes back to sleep. (p. 285)

The following two paragraphs are taken from the description of a political meeting:

Three or four were guests of honor and sat on chairs. They were old workers, veterans of the revolution of 1905. Among them were Tiverzin, morose and greatly changed since his Moscow days, and his friend, old Antipov, who always agreed with every word he said. Counted among the gods at whose feet the revolution laid its gifts and its burnt offerings, they sat silent and grim as idols. They had become too conceited to be capable of normal human feelings. . . .

Because of his [an anarchist siding with the Bolsheviks] excessive good nature and colossal size, which kept him from noticing anything smaller than himself, he did not pay sufficient attention to what was going on, misunderstood everything, and, mistaking the views of his opponents for his own, agreed with everything they said. (p. 318)

This is Lara at Zhivago's funeral:

Now she felt a wave of pride and relief, as always at the thought of Yurii and as in the short intervals of her life that she had spent beside him. Now, too, she was enveloped in the air of that freedom and unconcern that he had always emanated. She got up impatiently from her chair. Something incomprehensible was happening to her. She wanted, if only for a few moments, to break free with Yurii's help into the open, out of the sorrows that imprisoned her, to feel again the joy of liberation. Such a joy, it seemed to her, would be the joy of taking leave of him, of using the right and the occasion to weep her fill over him unhindered. With a passionate haste, she looked around her at the crowd with eyes as smarting, unseeing, and tearful as if an oculist had put caustic eye-drops into them, and all the people began

to move, shuffle, and walk out of the room, leaving her at last alone, behind half-closed doors. She went up to the table with the coffin on it, quickly crossing herself, got upon the footstool Evgraf had brought, made three sweeping signs of the cross over the body, and pressed her lips to the cold forehead and hands. She brushed aside the impression that the cold forehead was somehow smaller, like a hand clenched into a fist, she managed not to notice it. For a moment she stood still and silent, neither thinking nor crying, bowed over the coffin, the flowers, and the body, shielding them with her whole being, her head, her breast, her heart, and her arms, as big as her heart. (p. 500)

Brief and lucid is the manner in which ideas and issues are being dealt with. There is no discursiveness, let alone the essayistic penetration or even dissolution which characterizes the novels of, say, Mann, Broch, and Camus. The ideas are stated tersely, and clearly, in the manner of the aphorism or epigram.

*Doctor Zhivago* has its flaws too. The descriptions of fighting in World War I and in the Revolution are listless. The Epilogue, which is projected into World War II to tell the story of Zhivago's and Lara's child, is novelistically shallow and anticlimactic. There is arbitrariness in the way in which some of the secondary characters are brought into repeated contact with the protagonist and with one another.

The imperfections only serve to point up the very considerable merits of this novel. Its author, without being imitative or derivative, has gathered up a great literary tradition and brought it to life. *Doctor Zhivago* partakes of Pushkin's "uncompromising clarity," of Tolstoi's epic sweep, of Turgenev's sensitive descriptiveness, and of Dostoevski's ability to portray complex characters and to illumine the dark recesses of the soul.

# Frontiers of anthropological research

CLYDE KLUCKHOHN

On the assumption that not many of you are professional anthropologists, I'm going to start off with some general remarks on the field and its place in today's world as I see it.

Anthropology is the study of similarities and differences, both biological and behavioral, among the past and present peoples of the world. Investigation of primitive groups is not an end in itself but is rather our equivalent of the laboratory. Nature has carried on many experiments in biological and cultural variations, and the task of the anthropologist is to analyze, read off, and compare the results of these experiments. In principle, the anthropologist is as much concerned with Americans, Belgians, Chinese, Russians, as with the Ashanti, the Arunta, and Chukchee, and the Tupinamba. But the so-called "primitive" must be studied in order to get the full range of variability in human nature.

Anthropologists use methods and concepts from the humanities, the natural sciences, and from the social sciences. Intellectually, there are only four things which unify anthropology. First, a focus on man in all his variation and similarity. Second, a consistently comparative point of view. Third, a stubborn conviction that history, physique, environmental situation, way of life, and language are all related in discoverable patterns. Fourth, a premise that the non-rational and irrational aspects of human conduct must be investigated along with the rest. And it is these points of departure which largely determine the specific characteristics of anthropology as opposed to other disciplines that are also concerned with man and his works. Anthropology is concerned equally with the particular and with the general. Its data, whether hand axes or blood pressure or values, are eventually seen in the perspective of similar data, from a variety of populations.

Anthropology considers phenomena in the widest context that is feasible rather than restricting its attention to the purely biological

or geographical or political or whatever. In contrast to economics, for example, anthropology emphasizes the non-rational and the irrational factors as much as the rational. Indeed it may be said that the primary specialty of cultural anthropology is the non-rational, that is, the customary aspect of human behavior, whereas psychiatry and parts of psychology have taken the irrational factors as their specialties. Cultural anthropology takes as its focus those forms and modes of behaving that are the resultants of universal human nature as affected by the accidents of history precipitated in so many different cultures. The most specific quality of anthropological research arises from its preoccupation with culture. The concept of culture in the technical anthropological sense refers to those selective ways of feeling, thinking, and reacting that distinguish one group from another, ways that are socially transmitted and learned with of course some change through time by each new generation.

In the strict sense we can speak of culture only when there are two or more objectively possible and functionally effective means or modes of meeting the same need for, let us say, shelter, choice and preparation of food, weaning of children, and so forth. When a group exhibits a consistent and stylized preference for one way of satisfying such needs among a number of alternatives (or at least the observer sees alternatives), we may then speak of a "culture," since we are then referring to more than just an inventory or congeries of customs. One cannot grasp the network of selective principles that constitute a culture unless he understands the core of values, the cognitive assumptions, and what the logicians call the "primitive categories" of the culture.

The way of life that is handed down as the social heritage of a people does more than supply a set of skills for making a living and a set of blueprints for human relations. Each different way of life makes its own assumptions, its distinctive assumptions, about the ends and purposes of human existence; about the ways by which knowledge may be obtained; about the organization of the pigeon-holes in which each sense datum is filed; about what human beings have a right to expect from each other and from the gods; about what is good, right, better, worse; about what constitutes fulfillment or frustration. Some of these assumptions are made explicit in the law of the folk; others are tacit premises which the observer

must infer by finding consistent trends in word and deed. The unstated assumptions in particular are ordinarily taken for granted as an ineradicable part of human nature. And naive participants in one culture find it hard to understand that normal people could possibly conceive life in other terms.

In short, many cultural premises and categories are non-rational, and defensive attitudes with respect to them may be decidedly irrational. Now anthropology, or this hybrid monster as someone has described it, since it is neither a natural science nor a social science nor a humanity but a strange *mélange* of these things, is rather lusty these days. In a time like ours when educated men and women realize that the ways of other tribes and nations cannot remain matters of indifference or antiquarian curiosity, anthropology suddenly finds itself a little bit fashionable. Anthropologists have returned from the natives, so to speak, and are thinking and talking about the wide contemporary world, because in the present situation the constancies and variations between people and the reasons for them are a matter of the most intense practical as well as intellectual concern. This is why anthropology is taught today in the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State and in the various War Colleges.

The panorama of peoples and their ways constructed by recent anthropology has made a number of significant contributions to the modern temper, to the point of view held by educated men and women in general. The most specific is perhaps the demonstration, alike by physical and by cultural anthropologists, that while there may be meaningful biological differences between populations, "race" as judged by observation of a few outwardly visible features is not a scientific concept. This conclusion about race rests in part upon anthropology's broadest generalization, that is, the necessity of taking into account a cultural dimension in all understanding of human actions. Any particular culture of given locus in space and time is merely a specific manifestation of a greater phenomenon of which any one period is only a temporary phase. For example, the culture of Classic Greece was built upon earlier civilizations of the Near East in the Mediterranean Basin and was one early climax in the repeated strivings of men toward a humanistic rationale.

Anthropological knowledge and the anthropological viewpoint



are, however, disturbing to a good many people. In the first place they seem to challenge common sense and to threaten the stability of familiar cherished values. They make enormously complex the question of what is human nature, to which the practical man and the traditional intellectual find it convenient to have a pat answer. In the second place, anthropology seems to some to open the way to complete and chaotic relativism, especially as far as moral values are concerned. Actually the empirical data of anthropology do not warrant this latter fear, but it must be admitted that only recently have anthropologists begun to give the same attention to the order and the similarity in human cultures that they have given to the contrast and the variation.

Thus, anthropology has directly and indirectly made an important contribution to the rebirth of a concept that was taken for granted by Pascal and Burke and perhaps Goethe, but which for a hundred years has been obscured. It is that the things which all men have in common, bulk at least as large as those which separate them. Anthropology, as well as technology (especially in the realm of communication), has made physical appearance, language, and custom seem less relevant than humanities. The creation myths of the Polynesians take their place with those of the Hebrews. When T. S. Eliot juxtaposes Dante and Heraclitus and the Sanscrit epics, or when James Joyce draws words from a dozen languages and folklore from fifty cultures or when Igor Stravinsky or Karl Orff write music that is at once "primitive" and Greek and Oriental, then we are living in an anthropologically sensitive world. The massive continuities of human experience blend and accumulate more and more rather than remaining isolated and separate.

There are also some who are not happy that anthropologists are now working in international relations and industry and studying contemporary civilizations. But anthropologists feel that a science which deals with institutions and values in cross-cultural perspective has a necessary place in all investigations of mid-twentieth-century problems. On the other hand, it is true that some anthropologists have been too hasty and far-reaching in entering the modern arena. And one can point to a certain number of irresponsible pronouncements suggesting that anthropology has *the* answer rather than a useful, but partial and limited, contribution to make to some contemporary problems.



Finally, some theologians and philosophers reproach anthropology with exalting the irrational and non-rational aspects of human behavior. Actually anthropology has very seldom been vitalist in tone, urging a surrender to the forces of chaos and unreason. Rather, anthropology has been steadily committed to the search for discoverable regularities, or the common responses of diverse persons to similar situations. And in discovering them one finds both rational and non-rational components underlying personal choices, however individualistic, erratic, and irrational particular choices may appear to be. In this way anthropology is seeking to extend the areas that reason can understand and, perhaps to some extent, control. And this, I think, may help a little to halt the flight to the irrational, the terrified retreat to the older orthodoxies, which we have seen on a mass scale in this century.

Now, with this much background, I want to discuss just a few issues which seem to me to be on the frontiers of anthropological research today. I'm going to be concerned mainly about three or four problems that are primarily in the field of social anthropology, but precisely because I am doing that I want to start by stressing something that I think is also very much on the growing edge of anthropological knowledge: namely, the constant interdependence between biological and cultural factors in human behavior. The older physical anthropology, as we call it, had a certain usefulness in historical reconstruction and perhaps in certain other respects; but it was, on the whole, in the backwater of biological science. Within the last ten or fifteen years biological anthropology has been largely reconstituted on the firm foundation of Mendelian genetics, and, as such, it has an indispensable place in all anthropological studies.

We Americans have a bias in favor of environmental explanations. We don't like the kind of commitment implied in biological determinism, which holds if you have a certain gene or a certain combination of genes, some things are more or less inevitably going to happen. One of a number of ironies that I see on the contemporary scene is the fact that the United States like the USSR—probably more than any two great countries in the history of the world—is committed to the view that if men are wise enough and

energetic enough they can create the kind of world they want. In anthropology—partly I think as a consequence of this general environmentalist bias that practically all Americans share and partly as a consequence of the reaction against the absurdities of racist doctrine of the Nazi variety—we went through a period of about a generation in which most cultural anthropologists did not really do much more than pay polite lip service to the biological determinants in human affairs.

This of course is absurd. If a person is unfortunate enough to inherit a certain dominant gene that produces Huntington's chorea or a double recessive that produces juvenile amaurotic idiocy, he is going to develop Huntington's chorea or juvenile amaurotic idiocy. It won't make one bit of difference what culture he is brought up in or whether he is reared on demand schedule or by the clock. Yet anthropologists, like others, in an entirely warranted rejection of race on a phenotypic basis, have tended to jump from this correct position to another one which is not scientifically warranted: that is, that there are no differences in capacities—certain kinds of capacities—among various genetically distinct populations in the world. Furthermore, we have learned quite recently that some of the genetically determined characters which were considered non-adaptive are in fact adaptive and related to behavior. The incidence of duodenal ulcer, for example, is higher in persons of blood group O than in those of other types. Persons with blood group A are abnormally susceptible to cancer of the stomach, etc. Now these things—we need not go too much into the technical details—are relevant to behavior; and in these particular examples are relevant to psychosomatic and other kinds of behavior.

But the main thing that I want to stress is that this is a two-way street, that one cannot properly deal with cultural phenomena without regard for biological fact. And conversely, there are all sorts of biological phenomena that relate to humans that cannot be considered without regard for cultural artifacts. For example, man is the only animal for whom birth on the wrong side of the railroad tracks may constitute a barrier to gene flow. And there are all sorts of respects in which biological processes are triggered off by non-biological conditions. For example, among the Fiji islanders the "normal" response to the sight of a beautiful woman

is to salivate. We have a great deal of information about biological events, such as vomiting and fainting and so-on, which shows perfectly conclusively that the trigger is pulled on these biological events by non-biological stimuli. And of course it goes the other way. For example, in anthropological studies of "complex" civilizations, one of the main problems is what kind of sample to take, and what kind of group to study. Locality in the modern world, in large cities, is not an adequate answer, because the significant interactions often cut across political divisions. Some French scientists have recently developed a method that comes, curiously enough, from a technique devised for genetical investigations. The Swedish geneticist, Dahlberg, showed that for purposes of determining a breeding isolate, the best way was to get accurate figures on cousin-marriages. Recent work in France and Italy has shown that an adaptation of this same technique gives you not only a breeding isolate but also gives you a meaningful unit of social interaction. And it is interesting, incidentally, that in France the largest significant social units are not as one might expect the country, the mountains, and the remote districts, but are in the Department of the Seine, which is mainly Paris. I mention these things simply to illustrate my general point that one of the most important frontiers that is being pushed back in contemporary anthropological research is these mutual interrelations between cultural and biological factors. Now I want to return to things which are primarily, but not completely social. And again I want to re-introduce with somewhat different illustrations some points made earlier.

First, the comparative point of view, which is one of the distinctive features of anthropology. To Herodotus and to many writers of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, the savages or the barbarians provided a cabinet of human curiosities. Tacitus, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Melville, and others used the noble savage as a weapon of social criticism. Nineteenth-century anthropologists illustrated stages in the uniform social evolution culminating in the Progress of the Victorian Age. Anthropologists of the first four decades of this century prided themselves on their factual and objective descriptions of exotic ways of life. They lived among barbarians and noted scrupulously what they saw. They asked the savages what they did and why. Psychologists and

psychiatrists, however, know that there are some things which are true about any personality that even the most cooperative subject or patient cannot reveal—not because he doesn't want to, but because he is simply unaware of them. Similarly the anthropologist today realizes that some of the most significant things about a life way are so taken for granted by the participants in that culture that they can't talk about them. This growing edge in the analysis of human uniformities and variants departs to a considerable degree from four basic problems.

First, what can be said about a total culture that would not emerge from a list of its various parts? Second, how does one become an American, a Russian, or a Choctaw? Third, are unconscious patterns of thought, emotion, and action conditioned by or revealed in the structure of different languages? Fourth, are all values relative?

Let me note a few concrete things about cultural theory before we go on, starting with a very simple-minded but, I think, perfectly good example. When Americans meet, they shake hands. Japanese bow. The intent is the same in both instances. But Japanese-Americans, our fellow citizens who biologically are of Japanese origin, shake hands as naturally as Americans do. In other words, culture refers to historically derived regularities in behavior that distinguish one group from another. The details of the different culture patterns take their origin in the accidents of history. Presumably they first develop because they make some kind of sense in providing orderly habits for meeting biological and social needs under defined circumstances. But, once established, both the accidental and the original functional elements are ordinarily extremely resistant to change even when conditions have changed very radically. An example of the stubborn persistence of historical accident is the ludicrous spelling of our language, which squanders time and money for printing and creates needless trials both for our own children and for students from abroad. A blatant instance of the second type is the survival of our electoral college.

In short, any alteration of a culture is commonly felt as a threat. Unless the mores are stable, one cannot predict or interpret correctly the acts of others. It is for this reason, psychologically, that in all cultures, to a greater or lesser extent (varying in time in the

same culture), the innovator is commonly accused of "attacking our sacred customs." Cultural habits are also all too tempting as instruments for distinguishing the in-group from the out-group, citizens from foreigners, the civilized from the savage, the intelligent from the benighted heathen, the "good" from the "bad." Human beings are not organic machines who give fixed responses to stimuli. The cultural animal, man, responds to stimuli only as these are defined and interpreted in accord with conventional man-made categories. And it is these invisible screens, so to speak, which interpose between biological organisms and their environment, including their culture.

It follows that any culture is a bar to the free exercise of rationality. To be sure, as T. S. Eliot says, human beings can stand only a little uncertainty. We all require some order in our lives and some semblance of predictability as to what we can expect from others if our own conduct is thus and so. Life would indeed be chaos unthinkable if each of us were truly spontaneous in our behavior, acting out freely the impulse of every moment. It is fortunate for all of us that even the most iconoclastic among us (that is, those who are out of the loony-bin or in prison) follow established patterns most of the time. Human life is a cultural life and a moral life precisely because it is a social life. And in the case of the human species, cooperation and other necessities of social life are not taken care of automatically by biologically inherited instincts, as is the case with the bees and the ants. There is, to be sure, a serious question both for societies and for persons as to how much an individual should become the automaton of his culture. A healthy man is probably one who accepts, protects, and fulfills his own nature as a unique organization of experience but at the same time manages to identify wholeheartedly with the conserving and the innovating forces of his culture. Man is the creator as well as the creature of culture, and new patterns of culture are woven not only from the tangled web spun by the accidents of history but also from the stuff supplied from the unique biology and private experience of individuals. Cultures do change, albeit sometimes too slowly, and too late.

Cultures are wholes. Everything is somehow related to everything else. The problem of investigation is that of finding a point of entrance in the study of a circle. Whether I start with witchcraft

or with the exchange of goods or with the graphic arts, I ought to end up in about the same place if I follow out my data in every direction in which they lead. For cultures have organization as well as content. Even the most complete listing of separate traits will produce only the kind of utility possessed by a telephone directory or by a Sears-Roebuck catalogue. Hence anthropologists look at the web as well as the strands. Each strand gains its significance in part from being at a particular point in the network of relationships. The Hopi and the Navajo Indians both make sandpaintings, but the cultural meaning—the place that sandpaintings have in the total lives of these two peoples—is quite different. The Hopi sandpainting is an incident in the complicated annual ceremonial cycle. The Navajo sandpainting is an important technique used to cure an individual patient, selected to suit that individual's ailment and used at a time chosen by him and his relatives.

Not only is almost everything in a culture interdependent and interrelated, but much of the interrelationship must be understood as the actualization with varying materials of one or more themes that are central to the whole culture. For instance, in the case of Japanese culture, one can talk about something which can be roughly described as the "theme of aesthetic nicety." The tea ceremony and flower arranging are hackneyed illustrations, but the same mode is struck in many details in etiquette—the subtle gradations of bowing, the wearing of kimonos corresponding to the months and the precise age grade of the women, the refinement of court and academic procedures. Food among the upper classes is prepared much more for the gratification of the eye than for the satisfaction of the stomach. For instance in Kyoto in the really fancy restaurants, you get small trout that are put on the grill alive and then heated at just such a time and such a length that the cooked trout are curved in a way that fits the shape of the dish on which it is served. And along with this is put a little bamboo container with tiny pebbles that represent the colors of pebbles in the stream from which the trout came. And of course, the Japanese are more convinced than ever that Americans are barbarians if when this dish is served you start at once to eat it. You should look at it for at least ten minutes.

The Japanese language is saturated with minute prescriptions

that have aesthetic overtones. Some sounds, for instance, seem too harsh to Japanese ears for women to utter. A monograph could be written on the niceties of choice in the Japanese language as to which personal pronoun should be used in addressing one's wife in front of an acquaintance. There are about seventeen possibilities for saying what we say simply as "you." Similarly, two particles, "wa" and "ga," used to identify various types of subject and object to the verb, have so many nuances that they perplex even the Japanese scholars.

To say that a culture is a complex of interrelated parts, alternated with respect to a number of basic themes, is not to say that any culture is perfectly integrated. All cultures, like all personalities, have their contradictions and inconsistencies, their quirks and blindspots. But we are sure that the problem of pattern is an essential problem. It is what kind of order and arrangement rather than how much of something. As the mathematician Warren Weaver has written of Western science in general, there have been three phases. The first he calls "problems of organized simplicity" (e.g., the classical mechanics). He uses the illustration of three billiard balls on a billiard table. From that, Western science jumped to what he calls "problems of disorganized complexity": millions of billiard balls on a table, and you don't care what happens to a particular billiard ball but you can state in terms of the mathematics of probability, certain central tendencies. And then, says Weaver, in all of the sciences at present, we are in the midst of "problems of organized complexity." We don't know very well how to deal with them. Many anthropologists are sure, however, that for cultural phenomena a mathematic based on the logic of probability is in the nature of the case not appropriate. There is a nice illustration of this from another field. The well-known botanist, Edgar Anderson, has carried out in recent years some little experiments. He mixes up specimens of two different plants which all botanists agree belong to two different species. And he is careful to include some immature plants and some senile ones, making things a little more difficult. Then he brings in some zoologists and asks them to sort the plants. The zoologists sort highly correctly. Then he brings in some physicists and they sort almost as correctly. And he finally comes down to some experimental subjects who come from an institution for the feeble-



minded. And the feeble-minded sort about 80 percent correctly, as I recall. Then he turns these same plants over to some statisticians, who use the most refined discriminant function techniques and prove conclusively that all of the plants on the table are random samples from the same population.

Now, I'm all for measurement; but you've got to know what you're measuring first. Take the most elegant of the biological sciences, genetics. From a superficial view you may say this is elegant because it is mathematically precise. But how far would genetics have got if students of the fruit fly had made every measurement that they could on the wings and everything else? That wasn't the way genetics became refined. It became refined only after some qualitative categories, such as the distinction between forked and non-forked, scute and non-scute, etc., established significant discontinuities. And so I reply to some of our sociological and psychological colleagues, who say that cultural anthropologists don't measure enough, that we're perfectly willing to measure as soon as we think we know what is significant to measure.

The second basic problem concerns personality and culture. From ordinary experience we know that each personality is in certain respects completely unique, in other respects similar to certain others, and in some ways like all human personalities. The same may be said for each culture. Now the question, which is as old as Hippocrates, is whether there is any systematic relationship between similarities of culture and similarities of personality? During the last generation a collaborative effort of psychiatrists, psychologists, and anthropologists has endeavored to transform clinical speculation into exact research. There is no doubt that some outward expressions of personality are culturally patterned. But there remains doubt as to how deep-going these influences are and as to the extent to which we're justified in speaking of a typical or modal personality for each culture.

A few years ago some of my colleagues and I did a little "experiment" on this. We got projective test records from four different cultures in New Mexico, and then we turned these over to a psychiatrist who is an expert in projective techniques. We didn't say how many cultures were represented, and we didn't say whether the number of protocols on the table were from an equal number of individuals or a number of cultures. We said only: "Exam-



ine these carefully and sort them and see if you come up with any piles of peoples who seem to you to be similar personalities." She did indeed come up with a number of piles, about seven. But only one of these was statistically significant as regards culture—the Zuni. (You can't fool anybody on the Zunis.) But in the other piles we had Spanish-Americans, Mormons, and Navajos all mixed-up. We then got another projective expert from another part of the country and asked that this experiment be replicated, without giving any information as to how it came out before, and this time the psychiatrist came up with four piles, three of which correlated significantly with the four cultures that were involved.

Not long ago an anthropologist and a psychologist examined facts from thirty-seven cultures distributed over the world to test the psychoanalytic theory that cultural habits as to weaning children have an effect on the personality of the adult. They found a significantly greater amount of emotional disturbance among children in the societies where the weaning took place at two years or less. They also found that anxiety about aggression was markedly higher where there was a cultural belief that illness could be caused by animal spirits. These and other correlations are matters of detail, but they are examples, a number of which could be given, from which we may infer that there is some promise in these studies of relationship between culture and personality.

In the Russian Research Center at Harvard, we interviewed, observed, and tested a sizable number of recent escapees from the Soviet Union. Some of these had come to maturity before the Communists took over; others had grown up under the Communist regime. Members of both groups exhibited to some degree the traditional Russian "national character" we know from literature. But there was much evidence that most of the younger people, and especially those who had been actively identified with the Party, were being made over into the image of what the Communists call the "new Soviet man." These latter are much more formal and controlled, less warm, less expressive, less expansive. They are more distrustful; they are less identified with the social group in which their day-to-day lives are spent. They are far more committed to doing, as opposed to being. The Russian D.P.'s were also compared with a matched group of Americans, from whom the same information was obtained. There were some amusing

similarities and differences. The Russians and Americans, for instance, were just about equal in their love of material things, especially gadgets. From the point of view of contemporary life the most hopeful conclusion was the documentation that even the most brutal and totalitarian schemes to make a new man of the human animal meet with a great deal of stubborn resistance. Nevertheless, human nature can be changed within limits, and the Communists are, for better or for worse, engaged in a persistent experiment on a grand scale.

Now I want to say just a little bit about language differences, particularly in grammar or morphology, as indicators, in a sense, of the assumptions of one culture as opposed to another. Anything can be expressed in any language, but the structure of each language favors certain kinds of statements and hinders others. Japanese, for instance, is a language in which the relative status of the speakers is very precisely defined; but the rest of the content of the conversation is left quite ambiguous, or so it seems to us. In the tongue of the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia causation in our sense cannot be expressed—only propinquity in time or space. Thus any grammar acts to some extent as an unconscious philosophy. On the basis of a critical examination of languages of widely different ground plan, some anthropologists have questioned the universality and the necessity of such central Western concepts as time, velocity, matter. The time of the Hopi Indians varies with each observer. There is not permitted simultaneity; time cannot be given a number greater than one. The Hopi has constructed a consistent picture of the universe through a psychological time, which is rather like the duration of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. In other words, what this means is that our categories are not completely "given," as we tend naively to think, by the external world.

Experience actually comes in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions, which is organized by our minds in accord with the constructs developed in and favored by our culture. The real world is unconsciously built up, in part, on the language habits of the people. Language both determines and is determined by the rest of the culture. This does not mean that reality itself is relative, but that different languages tend to punctuate and categorize reality in special ways. As the great anthropological linguist Edward Sapir

remarked, "To pass from one language to another is psychologically parallel to passing from one geometrical frame of reference to another."

Finally, I want to comment very briefly upon cultural relativity. One of the massive movements in recent intellectual history has been that toward relativism. Anthropology, along with psychoanalysis, logical positivism, etc., has contributed to the crisis of values in the Western world. Anthropological research and writing have persuaded some educated men and women that all values are culture-bound, purely relative to given times and places. Now there are senses in which the concept of cultural relativity seems to me to be completely sound. Comparison of cultures quickly leads to recognition that they are differently weighted in their values. This is important. The true understanding of a culture necessarily involves seeing its values against a perspective of the historical experience and the present situation of that people. We cannot fully comprehend or appraise a moral judgment without taking the whole way of life into account. On the other hand, the inescapable fact of cultural relativity does not justify the conclusion of some that cultures are in all respects utterly disparate and hence strictly incomparable entities. There is a generalized framework that underlies the more apparent and striking facts of cultural relativity. All men face the same inevitable problems, whatever their culture. They must get food and shelter and learn to cope with their illness as well as with death. This is a platitude, but remember that nothing becomes a platitude unless it's interesting and important.

All cultures constitute many distinct answers to the same dilemmas posed by human biology and by the generalities given in the human situation. The basic similarities in human biology the world over are vastly more impressive than the differences. Equally there are certain necessities in social life for this kind of animal, regardless of where life is carried on or in what culture. Any science must be adequate to explain both the similarities and the differences in the values of each of the peoples.

For some time anthropology focused its attention preponderantly on the differences. The differences are there; they're very real and very significant. At the same time, one must not forget that cultural differences are still so many variations on themes

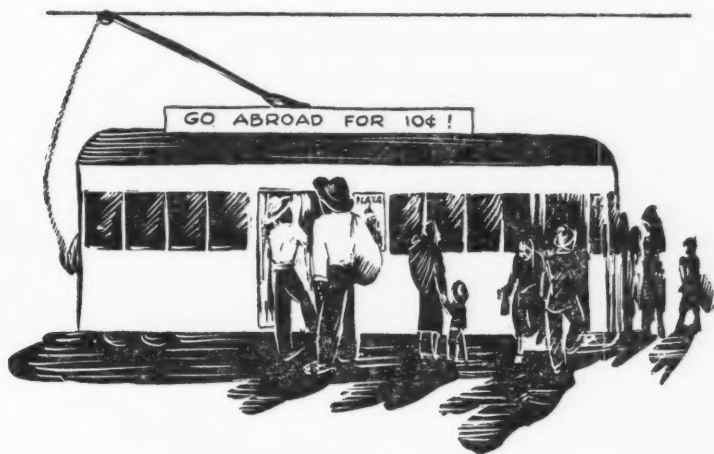
arising from raw human nature and from the universalities in the human situation. What most people want of the world is about the same. I'm quite aware of course that quarrels both physical and intellectual have developed mainly over modes and means of obtaining those ends. Millions have perished—and I'm sure that many more millions will perish—in struggles over modes and means. And yet it is worthwhile to remember that common understandings between men and women of different cultures are broad, general, easily obscured by language and many other observable symptoms. Yet these cultural trappings make up in some ways a comparatively superficial veneer. True universals, or near universals in values are, to be sure, comparatively few in number. But they seem to be as deep-going as they are rare. And anthropology's facts suggest that the phrase "a common humanity" is by no means meaningless.

Major intellectual developments are usually initiated by changes in what scholars regard as "real" and as legitimate objects of study. Such a change may be represented by anthropology's current concern with relations as well as things or by the respectability suddenly acquired by "values" as an object of scientific inquiry. I think there is a decent chance that the varyingly labeled studies of man may, as I said earlier, halt that flight to the irrational, that terrified retreat to the old orthodoxies, of which we see so many alarming symptoms on the present horizon. As the Regius professor of Greek at Oxford, Eric R. Dodds, says in his great book, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, an outstanding difference between ourselves and the Greeks at the time of Plato is that while the Greeks were deeply and imaginatively aware of the power and the wonder and the peril of the irrational, they could describe this kind of behavior only in mythological or symbolic language. They had no systematic intellectual instruments for analysis and understanding. Anthropology, along with psychiatry, psychology, and other human studies, has now created at least the beginning of an understanding of non-rational and irrational behavior. This is no vitalism, no abdication to the irrational. Rather, it is an extension of the area that reason can deal with and conceivably control in some measure.

## The Mexican border -- if any

JAMES L. BUSEY

GO ABROAD FOR TEN CENTS! Street cars of El Paso, Texas, have at times carried huge posters with that invitation. Anyone can in fact drop a dime into the token box of an El Paso trolley and take off for the Republic of Mexico on what is undoubtedly one of the least expensive foreign tours in the world.



Climbing aboard at the corner of San Antonio and Stanton Streets in El Paso, the traveler may find the car packed with Mexican and American citizens—the Mexicans returning home from work in El Paso or loaded with purchases made in the United States and the *norteamericanos* heading for shopping tours in Mexico. With a warning jangle the trolley car takes off and, with frequent stops and much bell-ringing, proceeds slowly down thirteen blocks of Stanton Street to the Río Grande and the international bridge.

To the greenhorn tourist the approach to the United States-

Mexican international boundary may seem like an exciting adventure. There are the Spanish-language billboards plainly visible on the other side of the river, the uniformed United States and Mexican officials, and the flags of the United States and Mexico flying above the bridge. Actually, most of the passengers on the street car are quite numb to the drama of it all. To most of them, the crossing of the border is a recurrent, perhaps a daily experience. Many live in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and work in El Paso; and to most of the others, a morning or afternoon of shopping on either side of the border is an event of no consequence.

At the Mexican side of the bridge, a customs official may carefully inspect the packages carried by passengers or he may glance into the car in a perfunctory sort of way. After the official gets off, the car proceeds through the busy streets of the big Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

After moving in a leisurely way along eight blocks of Avenida Lerdo, the trolley turns west and covers four blocks of Avenida Dieciseis de Septiembre in the business heart of the city. At intersections, throngs of people get on and off the car. At Avenida Juárez, the trolley turns north, creeps slowly through a seemingly continuous traffic jam in the curio shop and night club section of the city, recrosses the Río Grande—Río Bravo del Norte to the Mexicans—stops a few moments to permit U.S. inspection of parcels and identifications, and then returns to the business district of El Paso, to complete the circuit and the ten-cent tour abroad.

The close relationship that exists between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez can be vividly seen from the vantage point of Mountain Drive, which hugs the sides of a part of the Franklin Mountains on the north edge of El Paso. Spreading out to the south of the drive in a dramatic panorama is the whole great urban complex of the two cities, with a total population of from 300,000 to 400,000 people. In this metropolitan pattern of closely interwoven streets, business houses and homes, the international boundary disappears from view, and even the location of the Río Grande itself can be discerned only by those who know exactly where the river is. To all appearances, the great plain is occupied by one city. On the face of mountains which rise from the south edge of the metropolis, JUAREZ is painted in huge white letters.

If it were not for this, there would be no way of knowing by simple observation that more than one urban center, much less the territory of two different nations, is included in the same view.

Where boundaries are drawn along rivers, the geographical nature of the landscape is as likely to unite people as the boundaries are likely to tear them apart. At El Paso-Juárez, and from there southeast to the mouth of the Río Grande at the Gulf of Mexico, people are drawn together by the presence of water, which is essential for human and animal consumption and for irrigation.

What is true of border towns along the river is also true of those which are located in the desert country to the west of El Paso-Juárez. They are inextricably linked together by common desert problems, by precious water sources, and by the normal needs of interchange.

One of the best known, though not necessarily the most interesting, of these Mexican border towns is Tijuana in Baja California Norte. Whereas Ciudad Juárez is almost as large as El Paso, Tijuana is much smaller than San Diego, having a population of some 75,000 as compared with roughly 500,000 or more in the California city sixteen miles to the north. In contrast to Juárez, which has excellent paved highway communications with the rest of Mexico, Tijuana is relatively isolated from important parts of the Republic. Though there are railroad and air connections between Tijuana and the Mexican interior and though paved highways extend some distance south and east of the city, there are only unpaved road connections between Baja California Norte and the principal highways of the rest of Mexico. One result is that Tijuana is almost a suburb of San Diego. For her economic and cultural needs, Tijuana depends more on southern California than on the Republic of Mexico. With completion of a long-heralded east-west paved highway, however, this orientation of the Mexican city may undergo some modification.

To the visiting tourist, present-day Tijuana can be a great disappointment. English is widely spoken, advertising posters and billboards are as likely to be in English as in Spanish, and the inhabitants themselves seem hardly aware of their *mexicanidad*. Streets of Tijuana are now wide and paved. Prices are posted in dollars more often than in pesos, and Mexican currency is not



commonly used. Swarms of U.S. citizens throng the streets, and on Sundays the traffic snarl of U.S. cars returning to southern California is awesome. Except for the blocks of curio shops and a notably unrestrained night club life, Tijuana is very *yanqui* in appearance and personality. A trip to Tijuana, unlike a trip to Ciudad Juárez, seems hardly like a visit abroad.



Some 120 miles to the east of San Diego-Tijuana are the interesting and comparatively unknown cities of Calexico and Mexicali. Calexico, California, is a quiet town of about 7,000 inhabitants in the Imperial Valley to the south of El Centro. Its streets are quiet and generally orderly, and there is a profusion of flowers. The white-plastered buildings and sheltered sidewalks of the small business section are designed to counteract the boiling heat characteristic of the region.

Mexicali, by contrast, is the chaotic, dusty, crowded capital of the state of Baja California Norte, and is claimed by some to have as many as 100,000 inhabitants. Like Tijuana, Mexicali is not at present connected by paved road with the rest of Mexico, and residents of the city who have any respect for their cars can only drive into central Mexico by traversing over three hundred miles of United States territory, from Calexico to Nogales, Arizona. Americans driving west can and occasionally do cross into Mexi-



cali and take the local Mexican paved highway to Tijuana, thence to San Diego.

The business sections of Mexicali and of Calexico are separated by a high wire fence. Schools and parks of Mexicali adjoin the frontier, and old men in Mexico take their afternoon siestas on park benches, sitting up against the international border fence. Some problems must occur when playing children toss balls across the fence into the United States, though I suspect that people on the other side obligingly throw the balls back into Mexico.

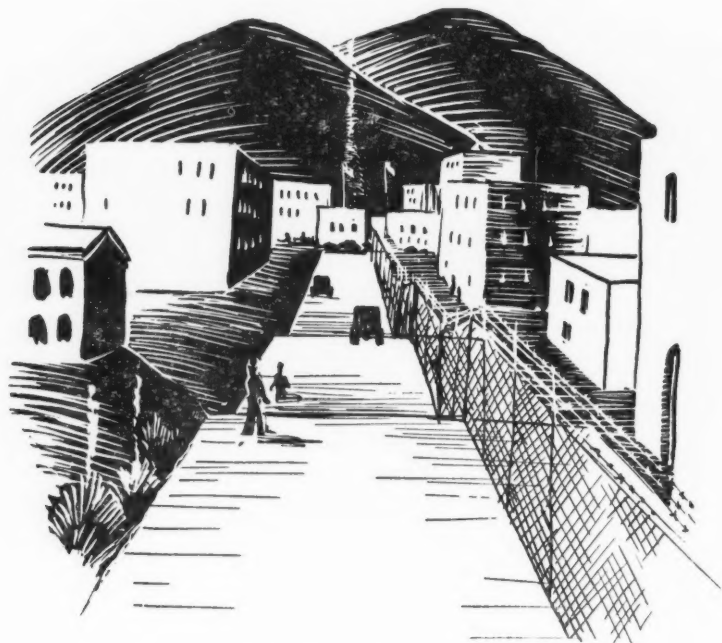
Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, lie roughly 300 miles east and slightly south of Calexico-Mexicali. The part of the community that is in Arizona has about 7,000 inhabitants, and the Mexican part around 25,000 to 30,000. It is only recently that Nogales, Sonora, has been connected by paved highway with the rest of Mexico, but the entire city has already taken on a renovated appearance, with improved business structures, better paved streets, a new municipal building, better looking schools, and so forth.

Even more strikingly than in the Calexico-Mexicali area, Nogales-Nogales is divided by an international boundary fence, which in part of its length runs in the middle of a wide street in the business section. The north side of the street is in the United States, the south side in Mexico. There are three openings in the fence, and pedestrians and vehicles are ordinarily in constant movement through the main gate. As at all border crossing points, Mexicans must have entry permits to get into the United States. However, officials on both sides are tolerant, and movement back and forth across the border goes on almost without hindrance.

Downtown business houses of Nogales, Arizona, adjoin a part of the business heart of Nogales, Sonora. Mexican officials, complete with uniforms and with revolvers in holsters, may be seen sipping milk shakes and sodas in Walgreen's a block north of the border. United States residents dine in the restaurants of Nogales, Sonora, and on the U.S. side Mexican families enjoy burgers at Zula's and ice cream sundaes at the Dairy Queen.

As in all the border towns, cars with Mexican licenses are common on the United States side. They may be seen taking family groups for picnics in the woods near Nogales, Arizona. Vehicles with American licenses are found everywhere on the Mexican side.

Both Mexican and United States currency are accepted without question on both sides of the border, and the Safeway supermarket in Nogales, Arizona, overlooks the main border entry a half-block away and advertises its goods in Spanish and in English. At any hour of the day Mexican women may be seen carrying their bundles directly from the Safeway store to the border entrance.



In some of the border towns, cooperation between the two sides takes interesting forms. Fire protection is one of these. I remember one hot day in July, 1957, in Nogales, Sonora, when I heard the sound of a siren. Fire trucks streaked northward along the main thoroughfare, followed by racing vehicles and a throng of running people. We hurried up to a high point on a nearby hill and there saw the fire engines, cars, and some of the people rush across through the international boundary fence to help put out a huge fire which had broken out in a square of business buildings some blocks from the border in Nogales, Arizona.

Fire protection has also been a factor in community relations between Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Sonora, which lie about one hundred miles to the east of Nogales-Nogales. For years it was the practice of the Douglas fire department to come to the aid of Agua Prieta. The latter city, with some 15,000 inhabitants, has until recently not had fire fighting equipment. Over the course of time and in the face of recurrent emergencies, the Douglas fire fighters and the border officials had come to dispense with boundary crossing formalities; and upon call by Agua Prieta city authorities, the Douglas trucks would simply speed across the border.

During the summer of 1957, someone in Agua Prieta called up the Douglas fire department to request that it meet a pumping emergency in the Mexican town. Though the call was not official, the Douglas company as usual rushed over into Mexican territory. Quite unexpectedly, this action was followed by howls of nationalistic protest from border officials and from city authorities of Agua Prieta. The point was that the request for help had not come from an official source in the Mexican town.

The outraged Douglas fire department responded by announcing that it would henceforth refuse to fly to the assistance of Agua Prieta. It appeared that the whole town could burn down as far as the Douglas fire fighters were concerned. Several blazes did, in fact, break out in Agua Prieta homes and business structures, and merrily crackled away without interference from the offended members of the Douglas fire company. Finally, when an Agua Prieta gas station blew up and threatened to burn much of the downtown section, the Douglas fire chief and one of his men did consent to cross the border in the capacity of "observers," and dragged along some hose which was hitched to hydrants in the United States. Afterwards *El Sol*, the spunky Agua Prieta weekly newspaper, printed a profuse note of thanks to the Douglas firemen who had helped put out the blaze.

By then the citizens of Agua Prieta were sufficiently embarrassed to get into action. Considerations of pride and safety required that they obtain their own fire fighting equipment. An expert from Nogales, Sonora, was brought in for consultations; men were sent out to look for fire trucks. Finally, after considerable negotiation and deliberation, the officials of Agua Prieta purchased a second-hand fire truck from the city of Bayard, New

Mexico, some one hundred fifty miles to the northeast. The engine came roaring across the border into Agua Prieta on Saturday, February 22, 1958, and according to *El Sol*, whose slogan is "For Truth and a Better Mexico," the truck was blessed by Father don Fidel Sandoval on Sunday, March 2. By mid-autumn of 1958 city authorities were still seeking a suitable building for the fire engine. But Agua Prieta had not raised all the money needed to pay the full price of the truck, and in late September the town was thrown into an uproar when all the volunteer firemen resigned *en masse* as a protest against public apathy. But it is expected that these kinks will be worked out in time and another chapter of close international relations will then come to a conclusion.

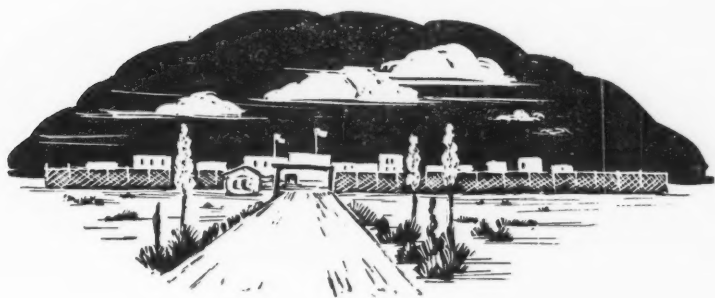
Meanwhile close relations continue between Agua Prieta and Douglas. One or both top corners of the first page of *El Sol* contain this admonition, in 24-point type: "Read the English SECTION, Page 2." On May 15, 1958, the newspaper completed five years of publication in the border city of Agua Prieta. Most of the advertising and congratulations came from business houses in that city; but at least seven ads, including two large ones, were provided by firms in Douglas, Arizona. As usual, the newspaper carried its sardonic column, "Cosas Que Observamos" (Things That We Observe); also as usual, the column opened with an editorial which is placed in each issue without change, in which *El Sol* pleads for adequate communications with the rest of Mexico and laments the fact that though Agua Prieta has on numerous occasions been promised such highway improvements, she remains in a condition of "isolation and non-communication" as far as the rest of the Republic is concerned.

In Agua Prieta, as in other Mexican border towns, the United States is known as *el otro lado*, "the other side." A thumb gesture made in a generally northerly direction may mean "United States," "*gringo*," or "Mexican living in the United States," legally or otherwise.

To the west of Douglas and Agua Prieta are a series of low hills, and the U.S.-Mexican border extends up and down them like a roller coaster track. From a point a mile or so north of Douglas, one can clearly see the line as a cut in brush and sage, stretching away to the horizon over each successive hilltop. The high mesh fences are characteristic of the populated centers.

There are other border communities in the desert country between Tijuana and Juárez. One of the smallest is Las Palomas, Chihuahua, which is roughly equidistant between Douglas-Agua Prieta and El Paso-Juárez. At Las Palomas one cannot help wondering whether the boundary between the United States and Mexico has disappeared entirely.

The little Mexican town lies on a flat desert thirty-four miles south of Deming, New Mexico. The last U.S. settlement on south-bound New Mexico State Highway 11 is Columbus, thirty-one miles below Deming and three miles north of the international boundary. Columbus is a hot, dusty village, which is famed particularly as the place which was raided by General Francisco (Pancho) Villa, revolutionary and bandit, on March 19, 1916. If one scans the flat desert to the south of Columbus, one can discern the town of Palomas looking more than anything like a Hollywood version of a Sahara encampment of the French Foreign Legion. The structures of the town are almost entirely one-story adobe; two or three extraordinarily large flags may be seen moving limply in the hot breeze, and the settlement sits serenely behind a high border fence which extends east-west across the face of the town, beginning at one end of the village and abruptly terminating at the other.



*El Sol* may quite justifiably complain over the miserable road connections between Agua Prieta and the rest of Mexico; but Agua Prieta has nothing on Las Palomas. For all practical purposes, Las Palomas has no connections at all with the rest of the Republic.

Back in 1916, when General Pershing was ordered to enter Mexico in pursuit of Villa, the U.S. troops attempted to construct a road across the Chihuahua desert for the passage of military vehicles. Pershing returned to the United States with the report that he could find no trace of Villa, though Mexican history books claim he returned because his forces, thrown out by an enraged citizenry from the city of Parral, were later defeated by Mexican troops at the Battle of Carrizal.

In any event, General Pershing left behind a memento—the so-called “Pershing Highway,” from Las Palomas south into the interior of the state of Chihuahua. Drivers who know the way can and do sometimes run jeeps and trucks down this dubious path of ruts, pits, and rocks to Casas Grandes, Chihuahua. As the crow flies, Casas Grandes is about one hundred miles south of Las Palomas; and it is the terminus of a paved highway which leads to the city of Chihuahua and to the heart of the Republic. The railroad station of Guzmán is some fifty miles south of Las Palomas, and trucks are used to haul goods across the bumpy, rock-strewn trail from Estación Guzmán to Las Palomas.

By any reasonable definition, however, Las Palomas is located at the southern terminus of New Mexico State Highway 11. No Mexican in his right mind would consider going from Las Palomas, Mexico, to Chihuahua City or to Mexico City except north to Deming, thence east along U.S. 80 to El Paso and finally south across the border into Juárez.

When Las Palomas residents “go to town” they visit the very pleasant little city of Deming. When residents of Deming or of nearby Silver City, or Lordsburg, New Mexico, run out of inexpensive liquor or want to do some holiday shopping, they are quite likely to take a run into Las Palomas.

Of course there are border officials who are stationed on both sides of the line. I have known of one United States officer at the Palomas entry who, when irritated by an obviously unintentional infraction, could become downright ferocious. Despite these facts,

and except for commercial imports either way, traffic goes on between Las Palomas and the adjoining United States territory with little real hindrance. In fact, communication through the United States is almost vital to the life of Las Palomas, Mexico.

What one sees and experiences in all these border towns and cities tells us a great deal about the nature of boundaries in general. Every national state is supposedly surrounded by borders. In fact, it would be hard to conceive of a country without boundaries. Whether or not elementary pupils must still worry very much about how France, or Bolivia, or China, or Turkey are "bounded," it is a fact that in the minds of many people boundaries are extremely important features of the landscape. Many people would not be too surprised if they were to find heavy black lines or perhaps even high concrete walls at the places on the earth's surface where international boundaries are supposed to be.

Boundaries are of course not mere figments of the imagination. They may in some cases be quite difficult to cross, and border officials can put all sorts of obstacles in the way of passage of people and goods. One may cite the fantastic labyrinths of barbed wire, searchlights, raked earth, watch towers, and pill boxes which have in recent years appeared in Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, many things go on in these frontier zones which are simply not known to citizens in the interior, who peacefully go about their business with the misconception that their country and the earth end at the same place on a border. But instead of being lines of division, borders are likely to be areas of transition. The meanings of national statehood become blurred, and cleavages between citizenships become obscured in the kaleidoscopic interchange between border peoples.

It is conceivable that unity with our neighbors might be strengthened and a real contribution to international peace might be made if the United States government were to complete the process of boundary elimination between ourselves and Mexico and Canada. This is a unilateral action for international understanding in a framework of national security which can be taken by the United States government alone, at its own northern and southern borders, and then adopted by the Canadian and Mexican



and by other governments at their own boundaries as they see fit. Such action would consist in the simple removal of all United States immigration and customs officials from our northern and southern frontiers, and the abolition by the United States of all restrictions on movement of people or goods across them.

At present, unwanted persons who are really determined to enter the United States can as often as not get into the country without great difficulty and their capture is likely to occur elsewhere than at the borders. Up to two million migrant workers have been known to make annual illegal entry into the United States, and I have been told by an officer of the Immigration and Naturalization Service that no less than 10,000 Mexican citizens are illegally living in El Paso alone. The effectiveness of border control, vigorously though it may be pursued, is more imaginary than real.

Uncontrolled entry of goods across the Canadian and Mexican boundaries would lead us into the many facets of the tariff argument, which cannot be repeated here. But I do not think that the admission without duty of products of either Mexico or Canada will harm us nearly so much as we can be injured by disharmony between ourselves and our neighbors. Nor do I suppose that foreign producers are going to unload their commodities surreptitiously upon us without expecting to take something home in return.

Extension of the El Paso-Juárez and Nogales-Nogales spirit to all United States-Canadian and United States-Mexican relationships might well begin a molding of unity which would have a chain of reactions throughout North America, the Western Hemisphere, the Atlantic zone, and the world. There are lessons about peace which even the village of Las Palomas ("The Doves") can offer to the peoples and the nations of the earth.



## Three poems

BETH SINGER BENTLEY

### WOODINVILLE MEMORIAL MEAD

This is an aged mouth  
Agape with worn-out teeth, grey  
As years, crooked stumps decay-  
Gutted. South  
A sagging fence,  
An oblique archway, whispers its boundary;  
North, a train-track; west  
a field; and, faded as old prints,  
An abandoned church lies east.

In death as well as life  
Their means were small: grey fieldstones,  
Split wooden tablets shaped like wings,  
Placecard their grief.  
The humble trees,  
Oak, maple, poplar, toll their slow songs  
Above the neglected lawn  
Where Mrs. Berggetta Neilson lies  
"Gone but not forgotten."

John Seberg, craftsman,  
"Called to be with the Eternal  
Builder," sleeps near the rusty anvil  
Serving Johann  
Kalb, the blacksmith.  
Over the billowing earth with its spongy swell  
Creep the little spiders  
Who leave their lives as white as breath  
Constellated like stars

Upon the exhausted grass.  
Rose bushes crackle with age and thorns  
And a coarse, red-leafed ivy warns  
The ubiquitous  
Mongrel who stops  
To give honor near one of the fallen urns:  
"Gone but not forgotten—  
Mother." Omnivorous moss envelops  
What the lichens have not taken.

Here, a pillored arbor,  
Its white paint peeling, stands open  
To the four winds, the benches within  
Waiting for  
A palpable guest.  
And all the winter long, an old tree laden  
With yellow apples mourns  
As the bird-pocked fruit swings in the blast  
And gust like yellow lanterns.

#### MOUNT SI

A daze of bees and dragonflies  
Stirs the dry leaves in their rusty heaps;  
Like a furry animal, the mist creeps.  
Season of litanies

And ash, beauty burnt to a crisp,  
Hushed funereal moods among  
Bereft trees, endless dirges sung  
With a dry cough and a rasp

In dead thickets. But look, look at that grey  
Rising with positive rancor, sharp  
As an adz, a mattock, a gouger-up  
Of the uneasy sky.

"Be hard, be hard," says old scar-face.  
"Beware the passionless fritter of the day.  
Chop your footholds with an axe as icy  
As my granite eyes."

Old broken snout, great grey stump,  
Says, "Shout when you pray; spend more than you have,  
Never drop your staff to grieve."  
Old leather-skin, old lump,

From sides which disdain to be slopes, looks down  
And listens to that aimless clamor,  
Then thunders in a voice like a hammer,  
"Alter every season

With your inalterable ways!" He bellows—  
(Old ridgy-back, old jagged shard),  
Down to his twittering children, "Be hard!  
Be hard; and learn repose."

#### THE WILD BLUE BLACKBERRY BUSH

O, the blue, the wild blue blackberry bush!  
The scent was like a swarm  
Of bees sent out to cloud the air, and rush  
About us, loud as an alarm.  
It colored the summer mornings with a brush  
Of amethyst. My son  
Would pause; then bracing his small form  
Hurtle into a run  
Towards that blue, that wild blue blackberry tangle,  
That thorny thicket, dark  
With fruit, like kisses from a fallen angel,  
Each protected by a dirk.  
It was I who picked them, handful by handful,  
Fingers pricked; I would smile  
At his pink mouth stained with the mark  
Of our mutual guile

Of the blue, the wild blue blackberry theft.  
Both coming and going we stole  
Those berries. No matter how many we took we left  
Booty for the next day; there was no toll.  
His hand pushed in a dozen, and he laughed  
To feel the juice spill over  
His chin. "More! More!" he cried, and al-  
Ways there were more.

O, the blue, the wild blue blackberry patch!  
August and then September  
Fruited our days. We delighted in our ravish  
Until the day we saw leaves umber  
And yellow against a grey sky; we picked a batch  
Of berries, firm and black,  
Squirting their tartness as they had before;  
But when we came back

To the blue, the wild blue blackberry, all  
Its harvest was over. We saw  
Dry pods and withered berries, a red globule  
Here and there, a natural flaw,  
Never to ripen. I turned, my gaze regretful,  
To share sorrow with my son.  
His small pink mouth was smiling and purple  
With the last one.

The blue, the wild blue blackberry stands  
Fusty and old now, all  
Thorn and coarse leaf; we pass, as autumn ends,  
Without a glance. Leaves will fall,  
Return, but the short death of the bush is not what rends  
Me; I know we'll never tarry  
Again there. Though the sweet bush be immortal  
We've eaten our last berry.

## Noodles and cabbage

SYLVAN KARCHMER

About twenty years ago when I was still in my teens the members of our family used to dine together weekly. In those days we were still a closely-knit family unit, consisting of aunts and uncles and innumerable cousins, and all of us lived in the same type of yellow or red brick two-story house on either Forest Avenue or South Boulevard. The food for these family dinners as a rule was a source of much mutual praise and admiration by my aunts and cousins; yet the cooking, whether it was done in Aunt Lena's kitchen or in Aunt Sophie's or even in our own was singularly the same, and I had the feeling, wherever I sat down, be it at the heavy mahogany table in Aunt Lena's great oak-panelled dining room or at Aunt Sophie's equally gloomy massive table (for all our furniture had been purchased wholesale in Grand Rapids by the uncles when they went east in 1920, in the prosperous year following the war and their killing in cotton) that no surprises awaited me. The food was staple, wholesome, abundant, traditional, rich—and unexciting.

In other respects, this summer of my seventeenth year was an interesting time in my life, for I was then in the late flowering of my Alexandre Dumas period, and his brilliant pageant of French history under Louis Quatorze made me all the more sadly aware of our staunchly bourgeois family life. A thousand times I wished I could exchange places with even the most insignificant courtier in that glittering court.

During the Friday or Sunday evening dinner, when we all were together, I found good opportunity to let my mind roam over the latest novel that I had been reading, since there was little in the family talk—whether it concerned the business ventures that came from the top end of the table, where the uncles congregated, or related to the vapid gossip of the women, in whose midst I, by virtue of my age, was forced to sit—to hold me. Surrounded by

them, I had to listen, as they exchanged recipes or discussed forthcoming babies in the family, though, to be sure, no one dared say as much in front of me; and their euphemisms always quietly infuriated me. I wanted to shout that I knew scores of women in Dumas's novels who were *enceinte*. (I'd been hard-pressed to speak the word aloud, since I was waiting to take French in my sophomore year.) Sometimes they did exchange more juicy morsels of gossip. Cousin Eugene, for instance, who never came to the family dinners, had been seen purchasing a bracelet in Linz's, and Aunt Sophie, the loudest and most daring of the aunts, knew to whom it was being sent.

Aunt Lena, who preferred to exchange recipes for carrot rings and crepe suzettes rather than to gossip, could not understand why Eugene couldn't give a bracelet to a girl. "Oh, my!" exclaimed Aunt Sophie, "you don't know the half of it—she's one of those kind, my dear." And instantly I had visions of the kind who lived on South Akard in one of those houses of which it was rumored Cousin Elihu owned an entire block. The women's talk was garbled in front of me, but I could smile with a superior inner smile. Sidney Milner, who had spent two years studying art in Paris, had given me a volume of Proust, and though he explained that I was handicapped by not being able to read it in French, yet he had prepared me for what I might expect. Aunt Sophie should know the kind of house Proust described, I thought knowingly, and then as usual I didn't bother to listen but talked briefly as time permitted about books with Myra, Aunt Lena's colored maid (this was family night at Aunt Lena's), when she passed out the soup plates.

Myra, like myself, was an assiduous reader, and I think Aunt Lena was fond of her because Myra kept her posted on the news, since Aunt Lena read only Dorothy Dix and the society pages in the newspaper. Sometimes the talk at the lower end of the table turned to politics, though it had to be an earth-shaking event to reach the family table, and when Myra came through with the tray to remove the soup bowls, Aunt Lena would beckon to her and ask in a low voice, "Myra, what's this about Roosevelt? Is he running again? I thought we just had an election."

"It's not an election, Mrs. Lena," Myra would explain. "He's planning to pack the Supreme Court."

"Is that good or bad, Myra?"

"It's very good for poor folks," said Myra, "because the Supreme Court has been very reactionary and thrown out all the New Deal legislation."

Whereupon Aunt Lena would look around the table and say, "Isn't it wonderful how Roosevelt is packing the court!"

One Sunday evening when Myra was off and the women got to talking about the war, which had just commenced within the week with the German assault on Poland, I was sitting at the lower end of the table next to Aunt Lena and she said what was this about a war? Myra hadn't said anything about a war to her. We explained the momentous news to her, and she clucked her tongue in surprise; then she leaned over to tell me about that time in 1917 when, at the Union Station, she had helped pass out cookies and coffee to the doughboys, and they all had sung *Over There* and *It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary* and *Roses of Picardy*.

"There'll never be another war like it," she said. "All those nice boys singing those sad songs!"

I could close my eyes and see her, not at the Union Station, but in a bower at Versailles, in a long cherry-colored skirt with a rose in her wig, giving herself to a handsome officer wearing knee britches; but when I opened my eyes and saw her chewing on a goose wing, with little dabs of grease on her chin and in her mustache, for she always enjoyed her own meals more than any of her guests did, I knew she couldn't have given herself to anyone, not even as a girl.

Dismissing her, I surveyed the table and speculated on the others. Who would have won favor at the court of the Sun King? Certainly not Aunt Lillian, even though she had been to France twice and on her second trip had brought back boxes of dishes from Limoges, much to the disgust of Uncle Karl. He swore he could have gotten all that china wholesale right here in town.

Aunt Lillian always carefully picked the walnuts out of her ambrosia salad and passed them to Uncle Karl in a little silver saucer that Myra provided for her. He would pop them into his mouth while he talked about how the railroad people had ruined downtown real estate values by building that skyscraper on Jackson. He had a stentorian voice, and in the olden days might have been a general or perhaps a member of the higher nobility. Maréchal-

Duc de Luxembourg, I thought, trying to select a grand name, but you couldn't do much with him, not after seeing him munch walnuts, with his gold fillings exposed for everyone around the table to see.

Nor could my Cousin Sadie have been in the *Almanach*. I could see her nibbling on mints, which she carried in her purse, between courses. They said that she had been the beauty of the family, and on the night of her debut at Columbian Club she had received four proposals of marriage, but I found out that her father had struck a gusher in the Mexia field just a few weeks before the event and the news had been carried in all the local papers. Cousin Sadie even had been divorced, but the difficulties had been, not over another woman, but a piece of property in Munger Place.

All in all, supper at Aunt Lena's was oppressive but bearable because afterwards I could spend the evening in Uncle Frank's library. His books were shelved in a huge darkish bookcase with a glass door, which was never opened except when I came over.

Tonight, however, I felt in no need to leave the family company. Across from me, though up the table a few places, sat a dark-complexioned lady with deep-set eyes and hair so black that it seemed bluish. When she raised her head, I could see the curve of her lovely throat. Her eyes kept passing over me, and I did not dare return her glance, but when she wasn't looking I examined her more closely. She had the most perfect nose I had ever seen. I knew she must be a member of the family, even though I did not recognize her, because there was no room at the table for anyone who wasn't a relative.

She was sitting next to a heavy-faced man, with a big square chin, whose head, completely bald, glistened in the light like a tremendous oversize egg. She spoke to him from time to time, and once I saw him pass her a black olive from his plate. That was when I caught her glancing at me, and though I hated myself for doing so, I blushed and lowered my eyes. Laure Mancini, Louis XIV's first great love, I decided, or, still better, Odette, for by now I had already skimmed through *Swann's Way*.

And then I saw her speak to the neighbor on her right, Cousin Sadie, who was eating one of her mints since the maid substituting for the efficient Myra had taken so long to remove the soup plates. I could hear Cousin Sadie whisper the *s* of my first name, and then



the strange cousin, as if placing me in the family catalogue, nodded smilingly.

Jack Stern, who had married into the family, was on my left. I asked him who she was and he explained that she was Cousin Isabella who lived in Kansas City. She was in town to see her daughter, a high school student at Miss Hockaday's School for Girls. "Some looker," he grinned, punching my foot under the table.

I knew he had a great deal more to say about her but refrained because of my age to tell me, and this annoyed me. I resolved next time I saw him to cut him dead, but I did vaguely remember my mother's talking about this glamorous cousin from Kansas City. I strained to hear what Cousin Isabella was saying now, but all I could catch was the slow murmur of her musical voice, and it sounded like the melody from the little music box in Aunt Lena's sitting room, a sad, fragile Viennese melody that Mozart might have composed. The music always went right through me. For the first time in my life I wanted to hear what a member of the family was talking about.

My mother was giving an aunt a recipe for something made with noodles and cabbage. I followed Cousin Isabella's eyes, as she leaned forward, exposing a little more of her breast (it was more exposed than any that I had ever seen at my aunts' tables) and it heaved tremulously, like the white tender breast of a little doe. "I haven't tasted that in years," she said to my mother. "Mamma, of blessed memory, used to make it."

"You shall certainly have some," said my mother solemnly.

At that moment Uncle Karl suddenly decided to call down to Cousin Isabella. He was chewing on walnuts and when he spoke a cloud of them sprayed the air. "I swear, Isabella," he called down, "you don't look a day older than you did when we all came up to Kansas City for your graduation. That was back before the first war, wasn't it?"

Poor Cousin Isabella sat there trying to laugh gaily. "Let's not talk age, Uncle Karl," she chided him.

All things considered, it was a ghastly evening, and as I watched her sad elegiac face, so remote and withdrawn from the rest of them, I wanted to apologize for the talk about cabbages and old age and their 30 percent off on everything in the world; and more

than anything else I wanted to go up to her after supper as she moved with the others toward the Blue Room, but instead I found myself in the library, where I selected from the bookcase a life of Madame DuBarry, with photographs in it from the old Belasco production, which had starred Mrs. Leslie Carter. I skimmed through a few chapters but read indifferently, listening with half an ear to the talk of the women from the adjoining music room. Aunt Sophie held the floor. "Honey," she was saying, "how shameless can a woman be . . . to bring him here to our dinner."

"Hush," I heard Aunt Lena caution. "She might hear you."

"She won't hear. She's too wrapped up with the men in there," said Aunt Sophie. "I do declare . . . I think she has her nerve . . . foisting him on us."

"But I asked them both," insisted Aunt Lena. "I couldn't very well snub him after she told me he was in town with her."

"Her poor father would just turn over in his grave if he knew," sighed Aunt Sophie piously, and then I heard Cousin Ethel say, "It's been going on for years."

Aunt Lena clucked her tongue, no doubt to remind them that I was sitting within hearing distance, and they started on Cousin Louise's second daughter, whose permanent had cost twenty-five dollars. I read another chapter before I realized that they had been discussing Cousin Isabella. It didn't seem possible, surely it couldn't be anyone in our family, but I knew better: she was too lovely not to become involved. In my mind I could see her coming to an assignation by moonlight, perhaps at Marly. She would be wearing a silk mask. Yes, in the moonlight, I thought, with her lovely breast shining in the white light. The vision was too much for me and I could not focus on my book. She seemed to float in the very air before me, smiling her sad mysterious smile and sharing her secret with me; and then, incredible as it was, when I looked up from the book I saw that she had come motionlessly into the library. "Am I interrupting you?" she asked in that soft tremulous voice, that seemed just above a whisper.

"Oh no," I cried.

"The last time I saw you . . . you were only so high," she said. The gesture was beautifully descriptive. "And now you're tall—and handsome. And I hear how smart you are in school too."

I should've kissed her hand. Instead I blushed and stuck my own hands into my pockets.

"What are you reading?" she asked, her eye falling on the book. "Such a thick book too," she added.

"Oh this?" I casually threw it down. "At home I'm reading Proust." No one in the family except Myra had ever been curious about my reading tastes before.

"Proust," she said.

"I guess you've read him in French."

Distantly she smiled, that enigmatic smile, and again I had the feeling that she understood me as no one else had. "Odette's my favorite," I said, "even though you might call her a courtesan—" I stumbled badly over the word and I was certain she wouldn't recognize it. "I'd like to talk about Swann with you," I said quickly. "Do you think he was foolish to fall in love with her?"

"Swann," she said tentatively.

"Swann," I repeated, wondering with trepidation if I had missed his name too. "Or however you pronounce it," I said.

"Oh, yes, Swann," she said in reply.

At that moment a man popped his head through the doorway. It was the bald-headed man who had sat next to her at the table, but now, knowing what part he played in Cousin Isabella's life, I examined him afresh with new respect. I could see him wearing a white wig and sporting the star of a noble order on his breast. "Come in, George," Cousin Isabella said.

George gave me a passing glance, such as I received from the uncles when they came into the library to discuss real estate and found me reading there. "George, you know Stan. He's Essie's second boy. Stan, this is Mr. Odendorffer." We shook hands formally.

"Isabella," he said, "are you ready to go? It's after ten—"

"Yes," she replied, "but I must tell Lena good night."

Only when he took her familiarly by the arm did the life between them become real for me. I had been reading a Somerset Maugham short story which dealt with a pair of longtime lovers, and in one scene Maugham described how after bathing together on a deserted Rhodesian beach, the man out of habit threw a towel around the woman's body and dried her while she placed one hand on his shoulder for support. The scene had burdened

my mind for weeks. Now I could see Cousin Isabella and her paramour together, and the impression was so strong that I was almost unconscious of her following Mr. Odendorffer out until, turning in front of the bookcase with its heavy glass doors, she said, "Stan, will you have lunch with me tomorrow in town?"

I could not believe my good fortune and yearned to say something gallant but all I could manage was that infernal blush. She understood, however, that my acquiescence was implied. "Around one o'clock," she said. "I'll call you from the hotel."

After she had gone I could smell her perfume in the room. I felt limp and could do nothing except contemplate their life together. She was not Odette but Louise de la Vallière, gentle, self-effacing, beautiful and tender, the least exacting of the many mistresses of the king.

Startled by the sound of Aunt Lena's voice, I jumped. A buffet supper was being served in the dining room. Would I come in? I shook my head. I had no appetite for the smoked salmon, the marinated herring, the pickled tongue, the hot corned beef and cold roast beef, the slaw and potato salad, the aspic, the *blintzes*, the *kugel*, the three kinds of olives and the ten varieties of pickles and the scores of other relishes and hors d'oeuvres that would weigh down the dining room table and would draw impatient and covetous glances from the relatives as they lined up to serve themselves.

It was better to sit here in the gloomy library and to think about Cousin Isabella, and this I did for ten minutes until my mother, who had missed me in the crowd, came in with a cup of hot chocolate and a plate of dainty petits fours, and she begged me not to make her take them back.

The next morning I spent reading *Swann in Love*, skipping the descriptive passages and concentrating on the love scenes and even attempting to memorize one passage that I thought I might use in our forthcoming conversation, but all in all, I was too nervous to read. Every time the phone rang, I jumped up, hoping it might be Cousin Isabella. I was curious to hear the sound of her voice over the phone. Though it rang half a dozen times, it was never she. By eleven-thirty I hadn't heard from her yet and I could contain myself no longer. Putting *Swann* away, I hurried down-

stairs and explained to my mother that she was to tell Cousin Isabella when she called that I would be in the lobby of her hotel at one o'clock.

"I have something for her," said my mother, "and I've put it in a nice little carton and it won't be any fuss at all to take."

"What is it?" I demanded.

"A casserole of noodles and cabbage," she said. "Cousin Isabella was asking about the recipe and I thought it would be nice if—"

"Noodles and cabbage for Cousin Isabella!" The prospect appalled me. "Mamma, she just asked to make conversation."

"You're wrong," she replied. "Everyone in the family likes my recipe. And she's sure to enjoy it."

"Look, I can't take any noodles and cabbage to her. We're going to discuss—Proust."

But my mother was determined, and when it came to food you couldn't argue with her. Secretly, however, I resolved to leave the carton in the car. I took the Dodge, and since I had little patience this morning to walk, I parked it in the hotel garage, an unheard-of and entirely indefensible procedure, which I would have been hard put to defend under normal circumstances. It was almost as bad as buying something retail.

I walked up to the desk in the hotel and with a bold worldly air asked for Mrs. Isabella Triller's room number. The clerk checked his records. "Nope," he said, "not registered."

"It must be under her husband's name. She's from Kansas City."

"There's no Triller registered here," he said with surly finality.

"But I'm positive—" He looked at me, the blood coming into his pinched cheeks, and I knew I'd better get out. I sauntered through the lobby without spotting her. Obviously I should have waited for her call instead of dashing down. I tried to reach home but there was no answer. My mother had talked about a luncheon or something and no doubt she had left the house.

Across the street was another hotel, and though I knew I wouldn't find Cousin Isabella there, I had to exhaust that possibility too. After I made the unsuccessful inquiry and came back to the first hotel, it was ten after one and I was in a state of nervous panic. She must be waiting somewhere, I knew, but the chance of missing her made me almost physically ill. What could I do ex-

cept sit in the central lobby and stare at a large ugly painting on the north wall, depicting the Galveston wharf. The artist had been literal and the picture was cluttered with too many people and too many things; particularly conspicuous was a heavy man with a square chin who, for no apparent reason, stood in the foreground gazing at a group of Negro workers loading bales of cotton on a freighter.

To avoid looking at the picture, for it was a monstrosity such as you could find only in a hotel lobby, I circled the lower floor and mezzanine, but always I seemed to return to the painting and to the stolid man who dominated the scene. There was something familiar about his face. Why, I thought with a start, it was Mr. Odendorffer, and of course she and he were occupying the same room. Hadn't they been lovers for years? I should've known . . .

I hurried to the house phone and asked for his room. "1107," said the clerk. "Shall I connect you?"

I waited until a woman's voice said, "Yes—yes," impatiently into the mouthpiece. Hearing it, something went numb in me and I imagined I was talking to Aunt Sophie, for there was the recognizable family tone in her voice, and its harshness chilled me until with delight I could discern beneath it the musical undertones of Cousin Isabella's voice. In that moment I could not force any sound into my own voice. Finally I managed to say, "Cousin Isabella?"

"Who is it?" she asked before she recognized me. "Oh, Stan . . . I was going to call you. Where are you?"

"In the lobby," I replied.

"Then I'll be right down."

I hung up and went into the restroom to wash. When I returned to the central lobby, she was seated in an overstuffed chair with her head raised to reveal the shape of her delicate neck. I could see her long eyelashes flutter and I could not bear to look any longer. Never more firmly than in that moment did I believe in the validity of their (it always came to me in the French which I could not even pronounce) liaison.

While I was contemplating her, she turned and found me there. She held out her hand, and the air around us was redolent with perfume. She chatted for a few minutes. Then presently she asked, "Stan, who told you to call Mr. Odendorffer's room?"

I must have blushed, and I could not think of anything to say. It was apparent that she was annoyed. "I'd just come in from shopping," she explained. "You see it's like this. I'm driving back with George—Mr. Odendorffer—this afternoon, so this morning I checked out of my own room. If you check out before noon, you don't have to pay for another day."

I didn't want to hear any explanation. What was she trying to do . . . protect me? "We all were coming down," she said. "We were driving in Annie's Cadillac. George and I and Annie." I remained silent. "Of course you don't know Annie . . . Annie Odendorffer. She's my closest friend. We've been friends for years now. We're each planning to get a Chippendale chair for our living room, Annie and I, and George knows a place here in town where we can get them wholesale." Her explanation seemed interminable. "But Monday, Miriam—Annie's youngest girl—came down with a cold, and Annie couldn't leave her. She's so devoted to all her girls."

She was watching me, I knew, and to avoid her eyes, I glanced miserably at the painting, thinking idly, so his wife's name was Annie. I might have known. And I might have known some other things too. No doubt Cousin Isabella lived in a red brick two-story house in Kansas City and served goose with oyster dressing for Friday night dinner. *Liaison*—bah! The whole business chilled me.

Cousin Isabella was still talking, and if I'd closed my eyes I could've sworn it was Aunt Sophie. "I'm so anxious to have a good talk with you, Stan, and you must tell me about those deep books you're reading. Oh, by the way, while I think about it, when I get back I'm sending you a cunning little book bound in the most elegant leather you ever saw."

"What is it?" I asked, curious.

She looked blankly at me for a minute. "I can't really recall the title just now, but you'll love it. It's red Morocco. And now—now," she said, holding out her hand as if to touch my sleeve, "let's have lunch. I'm starved and I know you are too."

A book, I thought, and she didn't even know the name. "I don't think I can stay for lunch," I said and stepped back, free of her hand. My voice sounded cold, and that was just fine with me. "I really can't stay," I repeated, and before she could interrupt I hur-



ried on: "But I've got something in the car for you. I'll get it now. My mother sent you a dish."

"What is it?" It was her turn to ask me.

I took a deep breath before replying. "Noodles and cabbage," I said finally, "and my mother says she hopes you'll enjoy it."

### INVINCIBLE

By JOHN B. THOMPSON

Till now my reason, like a village crone  
With busy tongue, spectacled sober eyes,  
And vast imagination, has left no stone  
Unturned the joys of love to routinize.  
With quoted Proverb prudence; Luther's crude  
Fig-leaf of usefulness; Paul's fear of fire;  
Puritan's inverted lust for all things lewd;  
And Kinsey's key-hole measures of desire:  
My reason tells me when and where and why,  
How far, how oft, how safe, till love and fear  
In my own soul commit adultery  
While ambushed reason watches with a leer.  
Meanwhile Eros, unscheduled, geyser-clean,  
Transfigures earth and sky and all between.



## Three poems

WILLIS BARNSTONE

### THE WHITE BYZANTINE CHAPEL

On this island, nude, and nearly treeless  
(But for the few acacia trees in bloom  
In the small plazas of stone and sun  
With their zones of salt and seaweed aroma),

On the far side, across the island rock  
(And the dry wind and fresh donkey dung),  
The cupola of the white chapel stares:  
A stucco eyeball, brightening the sky.

Inside are sparks and fumes of incense,  
And candle flames before the iconostas,  
Where a slant-eyed Virgin leans in grief:  
O points of mystery in the finite space!

Through the black air (within the whitewashed dome),  
The priest leads the orphans in prayer and song.  
O lifelong darkness of the finite vault,  
And the white dome vainly searching the sky.

### AN ISLAND

By white walls and scent of orange leaves,  
Come, I'll tell you, I know nothing.  
By this sea of salt and dolphins  
I see but fish in a dome of sun.

In stars that nail me to a door,  
There are women with burning hair,  
And on the quay at night I feel  
But hurricanes and rigid dawn.

On cobblestones at day I watch  
Some crazy sea birds fall and drown,  
And as the bodies sink to sand  
I know I pay my birth with death.

I only see some plains of grass  
And sky-sleep in the crossing storks.  
I know nothing and see but fire  
In the crater of a cat's eye.

### WINTER HOPE

Where is hope and the perfect April plain?  
Old cars are leaving thicker trails of smoke,  
And light is weak while the afternoon train  
Crawls toward the dull sun, a sulfuric yolk.

At home I am walled in; the blinds are down.  
The cracks on the loose door are held with clay.  
Winter grows gigantic in its frozen gown:  
A white, oppressive shroud on the brief day.

Yet, at night, a flashing hope sears the snow,  
And above, O high through the rayless sphere  
The mind soars upward as a lost balloon—

Another illusion of the winter gloom?  
Yet across the brain's doomed and black frontier,  
The dizzying space makes a blinding glow.

## Three poems

CHARLES BLACK

### SONGS OF THREE WOMEN

Maid of the willow-branch I saw  
Plaiting by some forgotten law:  
"Places and partings, brads and awls,  
Givings in love, duenna shawls,  
Choked quartz, and faces every one  
Are cobweb-shadows in the sun."

Lady beside her tower of stone  
Emplaced where silvered waters shone:  
"Cyclings of thundercloud and rain,  
Old hay and first green shoots of grain,  
Daybreak and dreaming, fall and spring  
Dance to a candle guttering."

Mother with all her children gone,  
Gazing across her cold brown lawn:  
"Steps to a meadow, paths that traced  
Safe through some unimagined waste  
Night journeys to the singing shore  
Fold inward and are seen no more."

### THE PRICE

Just trying to make it easy as you can  
On the family, you shop around. They start  
With the sale-price patter, then they slip the ham  
In the sandwich (ten cents extra), then the bread  
(Another quarter), mayonnaise (a dollar).

*Sorry, we're out of skip the mayonnaise.*  
(I'd like to slap one face for every sorry)  
And you stop them and you tell them level: Look.  
And they give it to you insolent in the eyes.

How could he stand and say, just barely say,  
A thousand bucks for burning up a body?

#### CONVERSATION PIECE

"I wouldn't go there, not for anything,  
I wouldn't care about it." Strange, to note  
These pride-reluctances retain their edge  
Of believing in themselves. So many people  
Talk of one thing, but never do you find  
Furtherance. "Well, I guess the stuff is ready.  
Marjory, climb on down, take out that pin  
And put your hat on." Ladies at the show  
Take off (remove) their hats. Some other places  
They . . . "She was laughing, though I couldn't say  
Just what was funny." That's a bold conceit,  
To laugh when things are funny. I have laughed  
On the rim, at almost-never ambergrise;  
Blue fright's the hardest laughter, or the shock  
Of being caught, caught irremediably  
In a paper box. The fat of fluttering souls  
Sweats off in a hurry, I can tell you. "Mother,  
There's dust on the car, and anyway I think  
I'll wait till Tuesday, when they start the sale."

## True witness: Katherine Anne Porter

CHARLES KAPLAN

As for aesthetic bias, my one aim is to tell a straight story and to give true testimony. My personal life has been the jumbled and apparently irrelevant mass of experiences which can happen, I think, only to a woman who goes with her mind permanently absent from the place where she is. (*Authors Yesterday and Today*)

Katherine Anne Porter, whom college professors are fond of referring to as a "writer's writer," represents a classic case of the author overlooked by the majority in his own generation. Her name can understandably mean nothing to followers of the Costain-Wouk axis; but even three widely-used desk dictionaries fail to include her—although Webster's *Collegiate* does give us such other Porters as Cole, William Sydney, and Gene Stratton. A recent compendium, *Essentials of Contemporary Literature*, includes references to Alexander Kuprin, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Richard Dehmel, and Boris Pilnyak, in addition to the more predictable Hemingway, Mann, Kafka, and Gide—but we search in vain for a citation to Miss Porter. She seems to have been relegated to a dimly-lit back corner, while our critics plunge onward, ever onward, into the mysteries and subtleties of Pound, Eliot, Faulkner, and James. Certainly the size of her literary output might seem to warrant this overlooking or outright dismissal: three volumes of short stories and one collection of essays in twenty-five years is hardly an impressive quantity. Fortunately, however, bulk is not a very valid criterion in measuring literary merit.

The paperback compilation of a group of her stories, gathered together under the title of *The Old Order*, provides an opportunity to reexamine some of these stories individually and as an inter-related group. The "Harvest" edition (Harcourt Brace) consists of six stories grouped under the heading of "the Old Order"—all from *The Leaning Tower* (1944) but with a pointed and excellent editorial reordering; "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," "He," and "Magic," from *Flowering Judas* (1930); and the novel-

ette "Old Mortality," from *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939). The editorial judgment in altering the order of the first group is so sure and so fine that one hesitates to carp; but "He" and "Magic" are excrescences, having nothing to do with the title of the volume, and "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," perhaps because it is the earliest in point of composition, gets at the subject of the South and the character of the indomitable grandmother from a perspective that is not in keeping with the other stories. It is, however, a tour de force in its own right.

The problem of the six "Old Order" stories and of "Old Mortality" is that of the relationship of the past to the present—or, in different terms, the nature and value of tradition. A great-great-great-granddaughter of Daniel Boone, Miss Porter has insisted on striking out into new territory for herself; but her explorations consist of searching into where she came from. An unorthodox and rebellious girl who at the age of sixteen eloped from convent school (as Miranda does in "Old Mortality"), she has since been obsessed with the task of understanding what it was she was rebelling against. Miss Porter, rejecting the rigid social and religious conventions of her childhood, has set her goal as one of finding the truth for herself, by seeing and attempting to understand the world about her as fully, as sensitively, and as honestly as possible. Wherever she has traveled, she has discovered that the strange scenes and inhabitants served only the more to provoke her memories of the once-familiar past. She has found the "constant exercise of memory . . . to be the chief occupation of my mind, and all my experience . . . to be simply memory with continuity, marginal notes, constant revision and comparison of one thing with another."

The past and the present are embodied in the two major figures of the Grandmother and Miranda: as one recedes into the background, the other comes to the fore. The first story, "The Source," gives us a full-length portrait of the indomitable Grandmother at the height of her authority, with Miranda being simply one of the unnamed and undifferentiated grandchildren; "Old Mortality" is wholly Miranda's, depicting her growing concern with the very problem which engages Miss Porter: namely, the attempt of each generation to understand itself by understanding its past—that is, the forces and influences which have gone into shaping the present.

"The Source" depicts the Grandmother, in one of her clockwork seasonal visitations to her son's farm, asserting the authority which nobody dares question. The basic contrasting imagery throughout is that of order as against disorder: the Grandmother wears "a stiffly starched white chambray bonnet," from which even the strings hang stiffly. "Underneath this headdress, her pale, slightly drawn, very old face looked out with stately calm." Her reaction to the farm is that since her last visit "everything was out of order," and, in a flurry of commands, she proceeds to restore everything to rights, that is, to the way things used to be. The signal that order has been reestablished is her traditional visit to her old saddle horse, Fiddler; and the stiff-legged gallop which ensues is a ritual performance, an act of asserting that nothing changes from year to year. It is the attitude of the children that defines Miss Porter's own attitude. Wild and free at other times, now they are "captured, washed, dressed properly . . . and no nonsense." Although they love the Grandmother as "the only reality to them in a world that seemed otherwise without fixed authority or refuge," they feel her tyranny as oppressive and wish to be free of her. Their mixed feelings perfectly represent the attitude of the youthful present toward the past, welcoming the certainties of the assured tradition and yet chafing under the rule it imposes.

The second story, "The Old Order," begins with a faintly comic reminiscence of the Grandmother and old Nannie, her one-time slave but now her only contemporary, ceaselessly sewing ornamental but useless patchwork spreads, covers, and scarfs from scraps of old family finery. The passion for enshrining the past, but in distorted, useless, and merely quaint forms, is also evident in what the Grandmother has done to the highly functional rolling pin hewed out by her remote ancestor and to her own father's razors: she has covered them with patchwork, added golden tassels, and put them in velvet and satin cases where they have become merely archaic, tasteless trifles. Properly enough, this handiwork causes the grandchildren discomfort and embarrassment, as does the attitude which these contrivances symbolize.

The two old women have arrived at that stage of life when their one topic of conversation is the past: "Even the future seemed like something gone and done with when they spoke of it." Having grown up under a fixed social and moral order, they view the pres-

ent with pessimism. On the topics of religion, the general slackness of the world, the decay of behavior, and children in general, their views are "firm, critical and unbewildered." Their fixed conceptions seem to establish them as rigid dogmatists. But as the narrative moves back into the past to present the history of the Grandmother, which is inextricably woven into the history of Nannie, our first impressions change. The two old ladies are not merely comic characters, after all; the Grandmother is seen to be a woman of strength, bravery, purpose, and responsibility—but having also the defects of those virtues: inflexibility and narrowness. Thus the mixture of feelings in the first story is carried over into the second one. The ambiguity of feeling and attitude on the part of the younger generation toward the older derives at least in part from the seeming simplicity but actual complexity of the past itself.

How, then, is one to understand the past? The next story, "The Witness," not only suggests one kind of history but also introduces the members of the younger generation by name, for the first time. In this story, the three children listen as Uncle Jimbilly, the ancient, irascible, and eccentric handyman, carves a miniature wooden tombstone for a dead jackrabbit. They listen respectfully but "with faint tinglings of embarrassment" to his flights of imagination. "Sometimes [his talk] would be an incomprehensible ghost story; listen ever so carefully, at the end it was impossible to decide whether Uncle Jimbilly himself had seen the ghost, whether it was a real ghost at all, or only another man dressed like one. . . ." In his version of the past, history and legend, fact and fancy, are indistinguishable. A favorite topic is the horrors of slavery, but even the children recognize that his account of the past is wildly exaggerated. To them, these are merely unbelievable horror stories; and yet, he is, at this point, the only witness they have of that era. At any rate, they are more concerned with the present than the past; the death of their jackrabbit and the nature of the sentiment to be inscribed on the wooden tombstone are of greater moment than Uncle Jimbilly's stories of the deaths of thousands of slaves. The miniature tombstone serves to reduce the perhaps terrible past to the very commonplace and prosaic present. To six-year-old Miranda, as well as to the older Maria and Paul, the death of the rabbit is of equal importance with the



death of human beings, if not of greater importance: the bland and unthinking attitude toward death is the mark of their innocence.

"The Circus" is Miranda's story, setting her apart from the other children, and is one of the "epiphanies" in her growth to maturity. Taken to the circus on a joyous family outing, she falls into a fit of terror at what she sees there and has to be taken home, sobbing hysterically. The crucial insight which she attains—but does not yet understand—is the vision of monstrous evil, paradoxically revealed at the heart of gaiety and fantasy. A series of images gives us fair warning, as human beings are described in terms of animals or insects: the audience is packed "lak fleas on a dog's ear"; odd-looking little boys squatting under the stands are referred to as "monkeys"; the clown on the tight-rope is a "creature" and an "inhuman figure," and then, as he performs his antics, his leg is described as "waving like a feeler above his head"; finally, he turns his head "like a seal from side to side." When Miranda is taken from the tent, she sees a dwarf at the entrance, "with kind, not-human golden eyes, like a near-sighted dog." But when she strikes at him, hysterically, his expression changes: she sees a "look of haughty, remote displeasure, a true grown-up look. She knew it well. It chilled her with a new kind of fear: she had not believed he was really human."

In contrast to Miranda, when the other children return they describe the animals in human terms: "darling little monkeys" in human dress who rode the ponies; "trained white goats that danced . . . a baby elephant that crossed his front feet and leaned against his cage and opened his mouth to be fed, *such* a baby!"; and, in a mirror-image of Miranda's reactions, trapeze artists "like flying birds." That night, Miranda tries to think of the circus in these terms; but as she falls asleep, "her invented memories gave way before her real ones. . . ." Miranda's true recollection withstands the attempt at willful self-deception. At the dinner table, while discussing Miranda, the grandmother had said, "The fruits of their present are in a future so far off, neither of us may live to know whether harm has been done or not." If the realist may be defined as one who resists self-deception, the realist in Miranda has been born as a result of this experience. And so Miranda, like

her namesake, begins to open her eyes to the "brave new world that hath such wondrous creatures in it."

"The Last Leaf" returns us to Nannie, who has, after the grandmother's death, voluntarily separated herself from present society. Living alone in a cabin, in a state of complete independence and almost regal isolation, she paradoxically serves to remind the others more forcibly of her existence. Taken for granted while she lived with them, now she becomes more missed every day; having no real contact with or active participation in the life of the present, she nevertheless exerts a felt influence. This influence is responded to in a number of ways, but most clearly by Miranda's father, who irritably acknowledges his debts to the past. He recognizes the lingering tradition she represents, even while he knows that her own account of the past is not entirely accurate.

The last story in the group, "The Grave," is one of Miss Porter's very finest achievements, and to say of it that it deals with Miranda's discovery of the facts of life (both literally and metaphorically) is hardly to do it justice. It is a story of birth, life, and death, in which each detail of the story contributes to the meaning. One bright day Miranda and Paul go out to hunt rabbits and doves. Exploring the abandoned family cemetery, they scratch around "aimlessly and pleasurably as any young animal" in what had been the grandfather's grave, and discover treasure there: a gold wedding ring and a screw head for a coffin, shaped like a silver dove. For them, the graves are entirely commonplace; death has no special meaning for them, and clearly enough, in place of death they do find reminiscences of life, of love, of beauty. Wearing the wedding ring has a curious effect on Miranda, as faint intimations of femininity begin to suggest themselves. Now, instead of feeling comfortable in overalls and sockless feet, she "wanted to . . . take a good cold bath, dust herself with plenty of Maria's velvet talcum powder . . . put on the thinnest, most becoming dress she owned, with a big sash, and sit in a wicker chair under the trees." Shortly thereafter, Paul kills a rabbit, but when he slits it open they find (in what is virtually another grave) a bundle of tiny unborn rabbits. With no verbalization, Miranda begins to understand "a little of the secret, formless intuitions in her own mind and body, which had been clearing up, taking form, so gradually and so steadily she had not realized that she was learn-

ing what she had to know." She refuses the rabbit skin (in the past she had used the skins to make fur coats for her dolls), and they bury the rabbits, promising each other never to reveal this incident to anyone. The event becomes a buried memory until almost twenty years later, when, "in a strange city of a strange country," the episode "leaped from its burial place before her mind's eye." An instantaneous recollection of that scene takes place when she sees a Mexican vendor hold up a tray of sugar sweets in the forms of small animals, and the smell in the marketplace, "of raw flesh and wilting flowers, [is] like the mingled sweetness and corruption" of that other day in the cemetery, the day they "had found treasure in the opened graves." The children had sought to kill, and had indeed found death and the evidences of death, but they had also found life—and the symbols for life and death were the same. The mingling of symbols so deftly and naturally placed in the story is perfectly representative of the way experiences operate in reality. The thing happens, but its full significance is not realized until years later. The revelation of meaning may take place under totally different circumstances, as an accidental conjunction of events or things suddenly illuminates the past and renders meaningful an event which appeared to have been completely buried. The way in which the past operates to shape or illuminate the present is skillfully rendered for us in this profound and moving story.

The novelette, "Old Mortality," covers a span from 1885 to 1912, although the forward action begins in 1902, with Miranda at the age of eight. During the ensuing ten years, we see her as she gradually reaches her own conclusions regarding the validity of other people's versions of the past. At the center of the problem is the story of her Aunt Amy, who, according to family legend, had lived a gay, romantic, and beautifully tragic existence, and who had died early under appropriately exotic circumstances. Miranda is willing to accept the family legend, but at the same time she cannot help seeing the difference between the other romantic family traditions and the unimpressive actualities that have come down to her. But, in childhood, the imagination is stronger than brute facts, and the children happily surrender to the family love of romantic myth (a characteristic which, it is suggested, is typical of the South in general).

Miranda's growing-up is portrayed as a series of collisions between the romantic dreams and the cold realities. At convent school, for example, she and Maria delight in reading Gothic penny-dreadfuls about life in convents. Referring to themselves as being "immured" gives "a romantic glint to what was otherwise a very dull life for them." At this time they meet Uncle Gabriel, Amy's widower, who, instead of being a dashing beau, is a drunken hanger-on at race tracks, desperately racing his one horse and living at a succession of cheap hotels with his second wife, an embittered woman ironically called "Miss Honey." Miranda's secret dream has been to become a jockey; but when she sees the horse's "bloodied nose and bursting heart" after the race, the reality in this instance overpowers the dream. Meeting Miss Honey afterwards, Miranda suffers another disillusionment when she sees the Aunt Amy legend from another perspective, that of the woman whose life has been ruined because of the persistence of the legend in the mind of Gabriel.

In the final sequence of the story, Miranda, now aged eighteen, returns home to attend Gabriel's funeral. On the train she encounters Cousin Eva, an ostentatiously realistic, tough-minded feminist, who supplies her with still other versions of the legend. Eva debunks the romantic myth, interpreting it in economic or biological terms; to her, Amy's illness "wasn't romantic either . . . she coughed blood, if that's romantic." But Miranda recognizes that this interpretation is as limited and as inaccurate as the romantic one. When Cousin Eva says automatically, "Your Mother was a saint," Miranda is "outraged." She realizes that Eva is not a "true witness," a realization that is demonstrated when Eva, despite her shrill denunciations of the family as an institution which "is the root of all human wrongs," immediately reestablishes the old, conventional ties with her own family upon their arrival. Miranda, significantly, is greeted coolly, because, it develops, she has eloped from school, an act for which she has not yet been forgiven. This attitude is, of course, in ironic contrast to the family's attitude toward the "romantic" elopement of Amy and Gabriel. Only the past, it seems, can be romantic. What the family does not know is that Miranda, in revolting against the "bonds that smothered her in love and hatred," has decided "to run away from marriage," too: "she was not going to stay in any place, with anyone, that

threatened to forbid her making her own discoveries, that said 'No' to her."

Miranda, listening to her father and Eva exchange gossip "in their friendly family voices," rejects the old order—*any* old order—that supplies her with ready-made truths.

What is the truth, she asked herself as intently as if the question had never been asked, the truth, even about the smallest, the least important of all the things I must find out? and where shall I begin to look for it? Her mind closed stubbornly against remembering, not the past but the legend of the past, other people's memory of the past, at which she had spent her life peering in wonder like a child at a magic-lantern show.

Miranda's decision not to be romantic, not to entertain false hopes, but to discover for herself the truth about what happens to herself, is the point at which we leave her, "making a promise to herself, in her hopefulness, her ignorance." There is no assurance that Miranda will ever find the truth, but the truth for her—as well as for her creator—will be seen and tested by her own experiences; it is not a truth abstractly conceived and blindly followed. The revolt against the convent, against religious orthodoxy, is only part of the larger revolt, involving the decision to search for personal truth. Like Miss Porter's own search, it must begin by examining the past—how it has shaped her, how much of it she can accept and how much of it must be rejected. And, fortunately, this continuing examination has resulted in a moving and masterful cluster of first-rate stories which remind us of her lasting artistry.

## authors

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*Best Articles & Stories*, which reprints in full the articles, stories, and poems from one hundred quality magazines judged "best" by the editors of these magazines, has honored *The Colorado Quarterly* during 1958 by reprinting H. J. Muller's article, "The Radiation Danger"; Gonzalo J. Facio's article, "Latin American Democracy"; Katharine C. Turner's article, "American Literature in China"; Judson Jerome's poem, "Gull at Play"; Cloyd Criswell's poem, "Road Mender"; and William Newberry's poem, "Inconspicuous Consumption."







